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CONTENTS

SUMMER 2002 VOL 137/NO. 4

Perspectives on the Two Kingdoms

- 246 Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine
- 261 Truth, Paradox, and the Possibility of "Lutheran Epistemology"
- 271 Athens *and* Jerusalem
- 275 Public/Private: A Concept for Action
- 282 The Responsibility to Teach

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Departments

- 244 From Where I Sit**
Celibacy or Action
William Rietschel
- 300 Administrative Talk**
Time Stays, We Go
Glen Kuck
- 302 DCE Expressions**
Walking the Tight Rope . . . Discovering the Art of Balance as a Child
of God
Patra Pfotenhauer
- 305 Educating the Whole Child**
What Can They Do? What Do They Know? Competency in the Arts
Jean Harrison
- 307 Today's Lutheran Educator**
What It Takes
Jonathan Laabs
- 309 Multiplying Ministries**
"How Ya Doin'?"
Rich Bimler
- 311 Secondary Sequence**
Which Prize Do We Value More?
Craig Parrott
- 313 Teaching the Young**
Wellness, Fitness, and Young Children
Shirley Morgenthaler
- 315 A Final Word**
In But Not Of—But In For Sure
George Heider
- 316 Index to Volume 137**

246 **Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine: Maintaining a Lutheran Balance**

A proper understanding of the two kingdoms doctrine, argues Moeller, should lead to a vigorously defended Christian world view across the curriculum. It should also result in the preservation of a tension over against a highly secularizing society and academic culture to sustain a strong Christian and Lutheran ethos in the Synod's colleges and schools.

by Eric J. Moeller

261 **Truth, Paradox and the Possibility of "Lutheran Epistemology"**

Zillman attempts to frame questions that might initiate a conversation seeking to identify—or perhaps discover that we cannot distinguish—that quality of thinking we may call distinctive in Lutheran higher education, that which lies at the heart of what it means to have been educated in the context of Lutheranism. He points to Luther's notion of paradox as a starting point.

by O. John Zillman

271 **Athens and Jerusalem**

Noting the apostle Paul's approach to the Athenians from the Book of Acts, Heider explores the not always easy relationship between the world of culture and secular knowledge and the world of faith. He concludes that those undertaking the calling of ministers of the Gospel are to *seek* the truth, even as they *proclaim* the Truth.

by George C. Heider

275 **Public/Private: A Concept for Action**

In order to effectuate social change, the church cannot withdraw into the world as it should be, but rather must energize the world as it is. To better equip the reader to contribute to accomplishing this task, Mau provides an understanding of the operating principles of the public and private arenas of life within the context of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms.

by Dwayne H. Mau

282 **The Responsibility to Teach: Is It Rightfully Assumed by the Modern Nation-State?**

Liefeld fixes on how the assertion that the modern nation-state rightfully assumes the responsibility to teach became a presupposition of modernity and whether it should continue to inform Lutheran pedagogy. He concludes that the two-kingdom doctrine may support an ethic of civility, but it does not resolve the question of whether the state should assume the value-laden right to teach.

by David R. Liefeld

From Where I Sit

by William C. Rietschel, Editor

Celibacy or Action

I doubt there will be another issue of this journal stemming from the combined efforts of my co-editor and me that more reflects our individual intellectual "hot buttons." For Jon, it's the relationship between faith and learning; for me, it's the relationship of church and state, especially the question of Lutheran involvement in effectuating social change. Underlying and informing (not always neatly) is the thematic strand loosely holding the articles contained in this edition of *Lutheran Education* together: the two kingdom doctrine. For that reason, the reader would be well served to begin an excursion through this issue with Eric Moeller's lead article, as it contains a comprehensive exposition of the doctrine and its place in Lutheran theology.

I now turn to my "hot button" issue. Much has been written stressing the vital link between learning and public life. Courses in "civics" are still a required part of the curriculum in most schools. And volunteer efforts as well as community service programs apparently are playing an increasingly significant role in the schooling experience of young people.

Yet for all the talk about the importance of civic education, volunteerism, and community service initiatives, the gap between schooling and public life is widening. While students are generally more involved in volunteer efforts and community service programs, they appear to manifest a deepening sense of apathy and disconnection. Note George Heider's observations in this issue's "A Final Word."

Albert North Whitehead once opined: "Celibacy does not suit a university. It must mate itself with action." I believe Whitehead got it right. However, I don't believe his observation is solely relevant to higher education. It applies to the elementary and secondary levels as well. And, yes, it also applies to Lutheran schooling.

Lutheran schooling needs to focus much more on equipping those placed in our care in the development of a public mind. Dwayne Mau offers some instructive delineation between the private and public arenas in this regard. One of John Zillman's initial framing questions addresses whether or not there is a Lutheran epistemology and I would very much like to be a participant in the conversation he calls for. At least as it relates to the linkage between learning and public life, what is needed, however, is a different Lutheran epistemology than the one that

has seemingly kept us on the margins of the public square, one rather than both concentrates on our personal salvation and emphasizes the art of public discourse, the importance of engaging alternative points of view, and the value of public work. I do not believe that our faith requires us to withdraw from engagement in the world or to concentrate on our personal salvation while the created order goes to “hell.” God calls us to be active in the life of this world and this great country.

The Lutheran theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood that celibacy was not an option when he took his willful stand against the Nazis that culminated in his execution in a concentration camp at age thirty-nine, only weeks before the end of Hitler’s regime. Seemingly, Bonhoeffer concluded that “the cost of discipleship” mates with action. He discerned that deeds are the test of faith’s significance in one’s life. While we are not saved by deeds, Ephesians 2:10 reminds us we are “created in Christ Jesus to do good works,” i.e., faith active in love.

Both our faith and our democratic way of life are more than clever-spoken words or practiced rituals. They are dependent upon interacting and creating with others; not only acting towards or against, but being acted upon, to change and be changed.

A civil society must center in people’s values, visions, and yearnings. Lutheran values as taught in our schools need to be introduced into public dialogue. While their introduction might not make society more democratic, their presence in the public square might make democracy more social.

In a related sphere, does not Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbor demand that we seek out the economic, social, and political causes which perpetuate human misery? David Liefeld believes this includes speaking to social issues with conviction, rationality, and the fervor of faith. Simply attributing them to sin is not enough. Students enrolled in Lutheran schools need to understand that this causal quest requires engagement in the civic and political order, since this is the arena in which social injustice and the denial of human rights can be remedied. After all, if this noble experiment we call democracy is not sustained by the spiritually mature, will it not most certainly be further eroded by the spiritually deformed and degenerate?

Students enrolled in Lutheran educational institutions at all levels need to be taught that they are neither exclusively private, personal individuals, nor exclusively public persons. They are rather a mysterious paradoxical tension of many elements, among them self-interest and self-sacrifice, power and love, change and permanence. Students sitting in Lutheran classrooms throughout this country need to be taught that, drawing on the words and examples of the Bible, they must involve themselves in the democratic process. Educating students enrolled in Lutheran schools in participatory democracy is a necessary precondition to intelligent and responsible adult exercise of democratic citizenship. Democracy is advanced citizenship, which requires participatory cognizance to be effectively practiced. While this observance seems to me to be severely under-addressed at all levels of Lutheran schooling, past failure cannot be an excuse for continued failure.†

Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine: Maintaining a Lutheran Balance

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"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (II Corinthians 10:5)

In current discussions of Christian higher education, Luther's two kingdoms doctrine has had a great influence in shaping what is conceived to be a distinctively Lutheran approach to higher education. Some argue that this Lutheran vision frees the scholar for research and study in his/her discipline without needing to develop a distinctly Christian perspective on that discipline (see, for example, Richard Solberg, 1997, "What Can the Lutheran Tradition Contribute to Higher Education?"). This article will argue that although the two kingdom's perspective does put some limitations on the effort to integrate our understanding of the Christian faith with

our scholarly efforts and teaching across the curriculum, a proper understanding of the two kingdoms will lead us to vigorously defend a Christian world view across the curriculum and maintain enough tension vis-à-vis a highly secularizing society and academic culture to sustain a strong Christian and Lutheran ethos in our Lutheran colleges and schools.

Varying Understandings of the Relationship Between Christ and Culture—Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*

In the now considerable recent literature on Christian higher education, it has become a truism to claim that what most characterizes a uniquely Lutheran vision of higher education is the perspective of paradox. It seems that we owe Richard Niebuhr for this buzz word, since in his landmark book *Christ and Culture* he titled his chapter on the perspective of Luther "Christ and Culture in Paradox." It is interesting to note, then, that it was a non-Lutheran theologian who attributed to the Lutheran tradition the hallmark of paradox, an attribution eagerly embraced by Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike. The idea of paradox, however, is really an idea without content. It tells us nothing positive about the Lutheran theological perspective. It only suggests that Lutheran theology is paradoxical, i.e., that it posits apparently contradictory assertions, but it tells us nothing about the content of those assertions or the substance of Lutheran theology.

So the concept of paradox is not really the place to begin our discussion. We do better to discuss the doctrine that most shapes the Lutheran understanding of the relationship between Christ and culture, what has been called Luther's "two kingdoms" doctrine. Interestingly, according to Robert Benne (1995), this label too comes from the pen of a Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, who did not intend it to be a compliment (p. 79). Nevertheless, Luther's understanding of the proper relationship between the church and the civil order can help us to develop a uniquely Lutheran perspective on the relationship between faith and the various disciplines of the academy or, as Niebuhr put it, the relationship between Christ and culture.

The spate of recent literature in the United States on Christian higher education is motivated by a concern about the problem of secularization. The fact that one university and college after another in America has traveled a path that leads from being an explicitly Christian college connected with a church body to being an essentially secular institution with little that is specifically Christian in its ethos and teaching (Marsden, 1994) has led those who seek to sustain truly Christian institutions of higher education to ponder how best to avoid following this same path. Basically this literature has revolved around two basic questions: (1) how can a

Christian college avoid the trap of secularization and yet remain scholarly? and (2) what do the *specific traditions* within the Christian church have to do with the agenda of Christian colleges and universities, i.e., what does a specifically Reformed, Catholic, or Lutheran perspective on higher education look like?

The answer developed to the second question will shape the way we address the first question, for better or for ill. Our first task, then, is to analyze the discussion that has taken place over the specific denominational perspectives on higher education, especially that which has been written about the Lutheran perspective. We need to assess to what degree this is an accurate portrayal of what is essential to a Lutheran understanding and, finally, to determine what is the best strategy for a Lutheran institution to take in avoiding the secularization trap.

No work has had a greater influence on this discussion than Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*. Essentially, this work, published in 1951, attempts to map out the different answers

Christians have given to how the church should relate to the world.

Behind Niebuhr's work stands Ernst Troeltsch's monumental work, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (1950). It is important to note this connection because the sociological

Luther's understanding of the proper relationship between the church and the civil order can help us to develop a uniquely Lutheran perspective on the relationship between faith and the various disciplines of the academy.

issues addressed in Troeltsch's work have led to a very fruitful model in the sociology of religion, sect-church typology, which deals with related issues and will be discussed later in this article.

Niebuhr gives us a typology of five different orientations toward the question of the relationship between Christ and culture or between church and society. These are briefly: (1) "Christ against culture" (in Troeltsch's terms this would be the sect type), (2) "the Christ of culture," which Niebuhr refers to as "accommodationist," (3) "Christ above culture," which Niebuhr refers to as the "synthesist" orientation, (4) "Christ and culture in paradox," which Niebuhr refers to as "dualist," and (5) "Christ transforming culture," which Niebuhr terms "conversionist."

The sectarian orientation is that view that believes the church should keep strictly separate from the world; it should avoid contamination by the world through drawing a well-defined boundary between itself and society. The Mennonites and

Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine

Amish would be good examples of this kind of orientation. They rejected full participation in society and did not seek to have a direct influence on society. They rejected any Christian participation in the state and maintained that a Christian life should be clearly set apart from that of the wider society.

“Christ of culture” would be the classic approach of liberal mainline churches today. In this orientation, little distinguishes a Christian’s behavior from that of the wider society. A clear understanding of conversion or of separation from the world is lacking. A Christian is believed to want the same things for society that any progressive citizen would want. While such churches claim a desire to influence the world, it actually appears that the world has had a greater influence on them.

The type of “Christ above culture,” the synthesist perspective, most clearly parallels Troeltsch’s notion of the church type. According to Troeltsch, the “church” embraces the world, not in the sense that it accepts the world’s agenda, but in the sense that all the world and all society are in the “church’s” domain. The theology of Thomas Aquinas best represents this perspective. The idea is that the church completes that which nature cannot do. Grace is not so much in opposition to culture but above and beyond culture. The Catholic Church most clearly embodies this type. In the medieval Catholic conception, the papacy wielded both a spiritual and a temporal sword. The church had authority in matters both temporal and spiritual because it was that supernatural institution that directed, embraced, and formed society.

Niebuhr’s fourth type, which he refers to as “Christ and culture in paradox” is, he says, best represented by Martin Luther. Niebuhr says that the theology of the “dualist” centers on the cross, that act where both the wrath of God and his love are most clearly shown, where the depth of human sin is brought into focus with absolute grace. Dualists do not believe a Christian society is truly possible because they are so conscious of the inescapability of human sinfulness; they do not expect essential improvement in society, nor do they believe that the church should involve itself directly in governance of a society because they do not believe that laws can essentially change the human condition. Thus, Luther talked about two distinct dimensions of God’s rule: the kingdom of grace, where the Gospel works, and the civil order that operates by law. Christians should be involved in the state in their vocations, but they should not attempt to create a theocracy. Church as church should not operate in the realm of the state. This division of the right hand kingdom (that of the Gospel) from the left hand kingdom (that of the civil order) corresponds to the distinction between Law and Gospel. The Gospel operates only in the ministry of the church. The Law operates in the realm of civil government.

Niebuhr’s fifth type, “Christ transforming culture,” corresponds most closely, he

says, to St. Augustine and John Calvin. He says, “what distinguishes conversionists from dualists is their more positive and hopeful attitude toward culture” (p. 191). A focus on the doctrines of creation and the Incarnation leads the conversionist to hope for a genuine transformation of society by Christian principles.

Unquestionably, Niebuhr’s discussion has influenced the most influential essays on Christian higher education. The fifth type that Niebuhr associates with Calvin corresponds to that model of Christian higher education most closely associated with the Reformed or Calvinist tradition. Just as the Reformed tradition has supported efforts to reform society along Christian principles, so in the field of higher education, Reformed scholars and institutions have argued that Christian education should seek to “integrate faith and learning,” that is, to bring Christian principles and understandings to bear on the issues and ideas of the various academic disciplines (Wolterstorff, 1999). In this educational model, the academic disciplines occupy the same place that culture does in Niebuhr’s discussion. One should attempt to Christianize these disciplines; they should be integrated with Christian insight. This is a clear application of the conversionist principle that Niebuhr articulates.

Among American church related colleges, Calvin College and the Christian Reformed Church have been the most significant exponents of this perspective. Reformed institutions like Calvin constantly emphasize the importance of “integrating faith and learning.” The intellectual father of this tradition was Abraham Kuyper, a prominent theologian and politician in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Holland. Though he did not immigrate to America, Kuyper’s place and influence on the Dutch Reformed churches in the United States is perhaps comparable to C.F.W. Walther’s influence on The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). However, while Walther was primarily a churchman and theologian, Kuyper was both a theologian and a man of the world. His biography and thought combine to promote the integration of faith and learning and the influence of the church on society. Kuyper’s influence is certainly one reason why the Reformed tradition has led the way in the discussion and debate about Christian higher education. No one in the Lutheran tradition of comparable stature and influence arose to address these questions. We will return to comparing and contrasting the Lutheran and Reformed understandings of the kingdom of God, but first we must take a closer look at the problem of secularization.

Secularization and Church-Sect Typology

To better understand the dilemmas we face, it is helpful for us to consider the insights of secularization theory in sociology. The discipline of sociology, since its

Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine

inception, was infected by the Enlightenment notion that reason was to replace religion and revelation in the ordering of human affairs. The assumption was that as reason and science advanced, religion would yield ground and eventually disappear from human societies. The belief that such a trend was indeed taking place shaped theory about religion in society from Auguste Comte in the mid-nineteenth century through the works of Weber, Marx, and Durkheim and on into late twentieth-century social theory. The presumed shrinking role of religion in society was eagerly awaited by religion's opponents and deplored by its supporters. Nevertheless, religious decline was expected and assumed by most scholars in the sociology of religion. This is no longer the case. Peter Berger is one scholar who once accepted the basic secularization thesis but no longer does so. In *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), he argued that the pluralism of modern life necessarily undermines religious certainty. Today, he argues that the evidence does not support that thesis: "The world today is massively religious, is *anything but* the secularized world that had been predicted (whether joyfully or despondently)

by so many analysts of modernity" (1999, p. 9).

The new perspective in secularization theory is that there are both secularizing forces and forces of counter-secularization operating in modern society. There is

no clear trend towards irreligion in the modern world. People continue to be, as they have been throughout history, fundamentally religious beings.

Though it is not at all clear that the modern world as a whole is becoming secular, there are clearly secularizing forces in our modern world that *do* impact both religious institutions and the beliefs of society's members (Berger, 1999, p. 7). This is why such an intense debate has arisen about the future of Christian institutions of higher education. The recognition that many colleges that once were explicitly Christian have become hollow spiritual shells completely captive to the secular vision of our society's secular elites has forced those who hold to a Christian worldview to confront the question of how to avoid this fate.

Finke and Stark's (1992) perspective on the dynamics of secularization in American religious history provide a valuable perspective on this issue. They reject the position that society is moving irreversibly toward secularization. They argue that the history of religion in America is rather a dynamic one where some church bodies

Adaptation or conformity to a secular society does not lead to strength or success in evangelizing or impacting society.

become secular and fade from significance on the American religious scene and others, those that maintain a strong tension between their belief and practice and the views of the wider society, grow in numbers and in social importance. In *The Churching of America*, they demonstrate how the decline of mainline denominations and the rise of upstart sects have characterized American history since the eighteenth century. The mainline denominations of the American colonies, the Congregationalists and Anglicans, declined in the nineteenth century, while the Baptists and Methodists grew rapidly. Then, as the Methodists became more comfortable and established in American society, their previous spiritual vigor was sapped and they eventually became a part of the declining mainline. The Southern Baptists, on the other hand, maintained their sectarian orientation, their tension with the wider society, and continued to grow vigorously throughout the twentieth century.

Finke and Stark's basic hypothesis is that churches that maintain a high degree of tension with society are, as a result, more likely to be strong organizations that attract and hold on to adherents, while churches that become comfortable with the social environment weaken and lose adherents. This is basically a restatement of Dean Kelley's influential thesis in his work *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* (1972).

Adaptation or conformity to a secular society does not lead to strength or success in evangelizing or impacting society. On the contrary, it tends to lead to diminishing organizational vigor and marginalization in the religious "market." Nevertheless, it is easy for church bodies to begin to weaken their stance of tension towards the world as they become established.

Finke and Stark also build on H. Richard Niebuhr's *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1957) where he applied Ernst Troeltsch's sect-church typology to the American scene. In this work, Niebuhr described the evolution of sectarian "churches of the disinherited" into middle-class denominations. Churches of the disinherited tended toward separation from the wider social order and toward legalism that symbolized and demarcated that separation. They were, in a sense, vehicles of social protest against that social order. They tended to emphasize the Scriptural directive to "come out from them and be separate from them" (II Cor. 6:17). Those who are poor have motivation to reject the world and a desire to find a religious basis for viewing themselves as special and set apart.

On the other hand as people prosper economically, they tend to be less legalistic and more worldly in their orientation. Rather than rejecting society, they desire to fit in with it. Niebuhr (1957), citing Troeltsch, writes about how this took place for the Methodists:

Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine

Methodism left behind the emotionalism of its earlier years and adapted its ethics . . . to the needs of its rising clientele. It abandoned lay preaching in favor of a regular and theologically trained ministry; it modified and softened in many ways the original stringency of its methods; it gave up its old program of mutual aid, so typical a feature of the religion of the poor; it left aside the semi-ascetic character of its early communities and arranged its rules to accommodate those whose interests made the world-fleeing ethics even less practical than it was for the poor. Once more a religious revolt, issuing in the formation of a sect, led finally to the establishment of a middle-class church. (p. 72)

As the social position of Methodists changed, their practices and their doctrinal emphases were subtly altered in ways that ultimately led to declining influence in American religion.

Niebuhr pays more attention to the social class dynamics of sectarian versus churchly orientations than do Finke and Stark, but the underlying dynamic described is similar and one which we should note. Churches, as institutions, must orient themselves between two poles with regard to their relationship to society: they can conform to society or they can stand in sectarian opposition to society. Poorer people are more likely to lean toward a sectarian pole, that of Christ against culture. Comfortable, educated, middle-class people are more likely to gravitate towards the pole of conformity to their society, Niebuhr's type of "the Christ of culture." As Finke and Stark show, churches that take a more sectarian orientation and oppose society's ethos are more likely to resist secularizing forces and also to be more vigorous in attracting and maintaining adherents.

Of course, Christians must seek their ultimate guidance from God's Word and not from sociological observations. Nevertheless, these observations can alert us and instruct us with regard to the perils and opportunities we face as we seek to be faithful to the mission God has given us in our churches and in our church-related institutions. Lutherans clearly recognize the pitfalls associated with the "Christ against culture" sectarian position. The legalism associated with this orientation leads to self-righteousness, the worst of spiritual delusions. Legalism leads us from trust in the righteousness of Christ to confidence in ourselves and our own righteousness.

However, the peril facing comfortable Christians in a secular society is no less dangerous than that of legalism. Worldliness (the word secularization is etymologically related to the idea of worldliness) can waylay our faith as easily as can legalism. Christ warned us of both dangers, of both Pharisaical legalism and worldly trust in Mammon. The Pharisees were sectarian in orientation. The Sadducees were worldly accommodationists. Jesus condemned members of both groups as blind

guides.

The same perils and opportunities that confront churches as a whole also confront our institutions of higher education. We can take such a strong sectarian orientation that we ghettoize our institutions in such a way that we stifle the life of the mind and cease to exercise our Christian vocation as salt and light in the world. On the other hand, in our desire for prestige in the modern academy we can so conform to the spirit of our age that we become thoroughly secular. We would then lose the Gospel message and also become irrelevant on the educational scene. Neither our society nor the Christian church needs more secularized church colleges trying to imitate the chattering classes of mainstream academia. We must avoid the twin perils of worldliness and conformity to our society's norms for academia, on the one hand, and a stifling and legalistic sectarianism, on the other. Properly understood, Luther's understanding of the two kingdoms can help us maintain the balance.

We must maintain enough sectarian tension with the world that we do not succumb to the forces of secularization and so that we nurture and maintain a genuinely Christian community capable of discipling and fortifying its members for their vocation in the world. At the same time, we want to avoid a legalistic rigidity that also would subvert both our proclamation of the Gospel and our attempt to sustain genuine scholarship. Which is the greater danger? Given the experiences of Christian colleges in American history and the pervasive tendency towards secularization in the American academy as a whole, it would seem that secularization is the greater danger. Better to be somewhat narrow and rigid and preserve the Gospel, then to be broad and open and lose the treasure of God's Word. Nevertheless, the goal to seek is neither polar extreme but a proper balance,

Two Kingdoms Doctrine and Lutheran Balance

The balanced and proper understanding of two kingdoms doctrine depends on a correct understanding of its place in Lutheran theology. Properly understood, the two kingdoms are not two unrelated, separate spheres; rather, they are two aspects or dimensions of God's rule in the world. They correspond to the distinction between Law and Gospel. The right-hand kingdom, where God does his proper work of saving people for eternal life through the Gospel, is the church. The left-hand kingdom is the civil order where God preserves human life, restrains evil, and brings earthly blessing through earthly authority and the restraint, correction, and guidance of his law. The Christian lives in the right-hand kingdom, the kingdom of grace, through faith in the Gospel. At the same time, Christians live in the left-hand kingdom through their love of their neighbor in the exercise of their vocation. Thus, the two realms are not

Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine

hermetically sealed spheres but rather two dimensions corresponding to the distinction between Law and Gospel. “We are speaking here about the two kinds of rule of the one genuine King, not about the cleavage between that King and the doomed usurper or pseudo-king, Satan” (Marquardt, 1990, p. 175). The Lutheran perspective is not Manichaeism or dualistic.

Perhaps, we can best think this through by considering Ephesians 2:8-10: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” We are saved by grace; works have no part in salvation. Nevertheless, works spring forth from salvation as surely and closely as verse ten follows verse nine. Likewise the two kingdoms are clearly distinguished by the fact that in the kingdom of grace, the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, while in the left-hand kingdom it is the Law that operates, not for salvation but for earthly good. The two kingdoms are distinguished from one another but not disconnected. They are two dimensions of God’s action, not hermetically sealed spheres, for a Christian will and must live out the love of Christ in daily life in the world, where law is the operating principle.

Niebuhr referred to the Lutheran perspective as dualistic, emphasizing the sharpness of the distinction between the two realms. Benne (1995, p. 80) and Kolb (1999, p. 114) have both argued that the two kingdoms doctrine should not properly be understood as dualistic but rather as a “duality” or a “two-dimensional” perspective. That is to say that the Christian life and Christian thought are not to be bifurcated into two exclusive spheres but that life in Christ leads us to creative engagement with the world. Benne puts it this way: “It is the creative task of each Christian to find the fitting deed between an adventureless acceptance of the world as it is and an irresponsible desire to transform it” (p. 87). A desire to influence or change society is part of our Christian vocation in the world. It is not irresponsible to apply Christian principles to social, political, and academic endeavors. It only becomes irresponsible if we forget that God’s Kingdom of salvation comes only through the work of the Gospel and if we somehow think that we can bring in the true Kingdom of God through societal change.

The difference between the Reformed and Lutheran vision of Christian higher education ought not to be one where Reformed Christians seek to integrate faith and learning and Lutheran Christians allow the academy to operate in an autonomous civil sphere. Lutheran Christians, too, ought to seek to integrate faith and learning. Lutherans can agree with Abraham Kuyper’s words: “No single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in

the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry ‘Mine!’” (Wolterstorff, 1999, pp. 136-137). Granted, Lutherans do not much favor the use of the word “Sovereign,” but we do believe in the Lordship of Jesus over both the right-and the left-hand kingdoms.

Lutherans ought to seek understanding of the various academic disciplines in the light of the Christian faith. However, in contrast to Reformed Christians we do so with the following caveats. First of all, we do not have quite as high a confidence in human reason as do Reformed thinkers. While Reformed thought often claims “All truth is God’s truth” with the confidence that true reason and God’s revelation do not conflict, Lutherans understand that the depth of our sinfulness and the greatness of God lead to situations where our human reasoning may appear to conflict with God’s revelation. When this occurs we submit our reason to God’s revelation. Lutheran theology is less rationalistic than Reformed theology, and this difference certainly ought to impact a

Lutheran approach to
Christian scholarship.

Also, Reformed
theology puts a greater
value on the rule of God
through law than does
Lutheran theology. While
Lutheran theology
understands God’s proper
work to be his gracious
work of salvation through

the Gospel, Calvinist theology eagerly seeks to extend the rule of God’s Law.

For the Reformed believer the visible church comprises the object and scope of his Christian ethical activity; through the good works which he does in and for her, he becomes certain of his election; by working upon her he builds the state of God on earth; the whole civil and societal life must from there be reformed in accordance with the Law of God (Marquardt, 1990, p. 179).

The Lutheran Christian will not reject the reformation of society on Christian principles because love for neighbor leads us to seek the good of the earthly city, but at the same time Lutheranism is more skeptical that society can be truly reformed by Law, recognizing that only through the Gospel can hearts truly be changed and only through the Gospel can God’s eternal kingdom be built. Niebuhr (1957) describes well this Lutheran skepticism about bringing in the kingdom of God through social reform. The Lutheran perspective recognizes that:

We seek to bring our Christian understanding to bear on our academic disciplines but we are wary of allowing human reason to trump revelation or of creating a one-size-fits-all Christian perspective on disciplines.

Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine

Human culture is corrupt; and it includes all human work, not simply the achievements of men outside the church but also those in it, not only philosophy so far as it is human achievement but theology also, not only Jewish defense of Jewish law but also Christian defense of Christian precept. (p. 153)

Lutheran skepticism about human reason or the attempt to bring in the kingdom of God through law guards us against the worldliness that would lead us to meld reason and revelation or attempt to create a Christian state. In higher education, we seek to bring our Christian understanding to bear on our academic disciplines, but we are wary of allowing human reason to trump revelation or of creating a one-size-fits-all Christian perspective on disciplines that blurs the distinction between the left-hand kingdom and the right-hand kingdom. This wariness ought to push us in the direction of the sectarian pole of separation from the world. At the same time, the fact that vocation leads us into the world and that our same loving God rules both left- and right-hand kingdom, albeit in different ways, keeps us engaged with human culture and the civil order of the world. Thus, our two-dimensional perspective provides us with a safeguard and balance so that we neither develop a triumphalist perspective nor allow reason to subtly undermine Biblical theology.

If we exaggerate the duality of the two kingdoms, we may encourage secularization in another way. This kind of dualism would separate theology and other disciplines completely so that they would operate in autonomous spheres. When confronting *this* tendency we would do well to say with the Reformed: "All truth is God's truth." Benne (2001) puts it this way: In Christian higher education we must recognize that Scripture gives "an account of life that is comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central" (p. 15). The truth of revelation must inform and shape our scholarship in other fields. We cannot have Christian scholarship that operates in an autonomous sphere untouched by the Christian faith. We must do the kind of thinking that Kuyper promoted in the Reformed tradition, understanding our academic fields from a specifically Christian perspective. Wolterstorff (1999) describes the Kuyperian view this way:

Learning in general, and Christian learning, in particular, is understood as a *perspectival* enterprise . . . Learning is unavoidably shaped by our contingent particularities: by our religions, especially . . . At the heart of the Kuyperian tradition in Christian higher education is *explicit rejection* of the Enlightenment dream of a learning which is neutral. (p. 137, emphases mine)

An excellent example of how this ought to be applied can be found in a consideration of how Christian higher education should approach evolutionary biology. A dualistic approach might suggest that science and theology are two distinct realms with their own rules. Therefore, Christians should let science be

science as it develops evolutionary theory according to the rules of science while theology maintains the doctrine of creation according to Biblical revelation. The problem with this perspective, argued even by some orthodox Lutheran scientists, is it concedes too much to the evolutionists.

Phillip Johnson ably critiques this kind of thinking in his book *Darwin on Trial* (1993). He points out that evolutionary theory has excluded the possibility of divine causation or intelligent design on philosophical grounds. Thus, for example, when evidence might suggest that random chance could not account for evolutionary development, proponents of evolutionary theory exclude any other explanation *a priori*. They are happy to agree to a separate spheres understanding of knowledge because it permits their naturalistic philosophical assumptions to remain unchallenged. Johnson quotes Stephen Gould as saying that “science and religion are separate but equal in importance . . . ‘because science treats factual reality, while religion struggles with human morality’” (p. 161). Some Lutherans would accede to this “separate but equal” perspective on biological science. But Christians who regard Biblical truth as “comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central” must unmask the false philosophical assumptions that masquerade as objective science.

The problem of separation of faith and scholarship into autonomous spheres is exemplified in some of the recent writings on the Lutheran perspective on higher education. For example, Mark Edwards, then president of St. Olaf College, stated, there should be in most cases no substantive difference between scholarship by Christians and by non-Christians . . . Christian substance appears in the Christian calling of faculty, staff, and students and in the Christian context surrounding the academic enterprise—only rarely in the results of scholarly inquiry itself. (Benne, 2001, p. 43)

This perspective would seem to betray either a naïveté about the presumed “objectivity” of secular scholarship or a secularized Christianity that can no longer see the difference between a Christian perspective and a naturalistic one. Niebuhr (1951) put it well: “Dualism may be the refuge of worldly-minded persons who wish to make a slight obeisance in the direction of Christ” (p. 184).

Such naïveté also appears to be present in those that argue that, because of the two kingdoms understanding, in the Lutheran tradition the problem of secularization is not a concern. Simmons (1998), for example, tells us that the two kingdoms doctrine “sustains dialogue” between the Christian worldview and the academic disciplines and “does not fear a slippery slope into secularity” (p. 34). Though it is certainly true that Lutheranism sustains a different view of the relationship between church and world than does the Anabaptist or Calvinist tradition, it certainly gives us no immunity from the danger of secularization. Scripture, the history of Christian higher

education in America, the secularization of state church Lutheranism in Europe, and the insights of sociology of religion all clearly demonstrate that Lutherans, like Christians of all ages, are not immune to the inroads of secularization or worldly mentalities of other kinds.

Benne (2001) argues, “the old Protestant mainstream denominations bring forth many intense Christians, but perhaps not enough to supply the necessary critical masses for sustaining their own colleges as Christian colleges” (p. 181). Why is this? It is due to the extensive secularization that has occurred within these church bodies. This is in line with Finke and Stark’s (1992) analysis. Church bodies that reduce their tension with the wider society will decline in vigor and influence. Benne clearly sees this problem, but at the same time he takes the LCMS to task for being too sectarian and for fostering a stringent orthodoxy that harms intellectual life. Rigid and legalistic sectarianism probably does cramp the intellectual life of some church-related universities. However, from the sociological perspective, some degree of sectarian orientation or tension with the wider society is necessary in order to maintain both the spiritual vitality and organizational vigor of religious movements. At the same time, both the LCMS and the Christian Reformed Church give evidence that a sectarian orientation does not necessarily destroy intellectual life. Witness the number of noted Christian intellectuals that have been nurtured in these bodies.

Some Lutheran academicians who write on this subject seem more fearful of sectarianism than of secularization. They seem more concerned about the academic esteem of their institutions than about faithfulness to the Word of God. As faithful Christians who have been given the stewardship of our Lutheran schools, perhaps we should not be so fearful of a somewhat sectarian orientation. Certainly we must bear the reproach of the world. We must transform our minds by the renewing of the Holy Spirit rather than conform to this world. The key is to maintain a proper balance. A two-dimensional rather than dualistic understanding of two kingdoms doctrine can enable us to do so. It will enable us to engage our Christian worldview with other academic disciplines in a way that is similar, with certain limitations, to the Reformed concept of integration of faith and learning. At the same time, a two-dimensional understanding of the two kingdoms will also enable us to preserve the distance from or tension against the secular academy necessary to resist the dynamic of secularization.†

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Truth, Paradox and the Possibility of “Lutheran Epistemology”

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We who call ourselves Lutheran in higher education struggle to find ways of being unique. We seem to lack “brand identity,” so important in competing for a share of the students of traditional college age. Studies find us lagging at times in our ability to capture the interest of families and their college-bound sons and daughters even while the research indicates that we post pretty good numbers in terms of the values transmitted in the experiences of our alumni (Hardwick-Day, 2001). While there are questions about some of those studies, the overall trajectory of the research leans toward the idea that we’re doing something right. It’s still difficult, however, to put a finger on what makes an institution “uniquely Lutheran.”

Other denominational bodies seem to wear more recognizable philosophic/theological stripes in how they approach baccalaureate education. In general, the Catholic Church has traditionally aligned itself with issues of social justice as an identity; Lutherans have traditionally shied away from the political arena, especially where activism is concerned. The

Reformed tradition embraces the Calvinist idea of triumphalism, that is, bringing God's kingdom to reality in our own day and age with a corollary emphasis on "Christianizing" academic disciplines, especially those that come close to attempting to describe or explain what it means to be human (Hughes & Adrian, 1997). Lutherans talk about integrating faith and learning, but the result, at least in the conversations I have had, comes out in less than distinctive forms, but usually nibbling at the edges of the Reformed position.

Writers in evangelical Christian higher education, notably Hamilton and Mathisen (1997), have managed to define the integration of faith and learning into four models: *convergence*, essentially that intellectual knowledge and Christianity lead to the same conclusions and therefore need not be reconciled to each other; the aforementioned *triumphalism*, but which they further explain operates from the assumption that "the prevailing intellectual culture [is] flawed by the nature of its secular assumptions" and therefore "religious ways of knowing are by definition always superior to secular ways"; the *value-added* model, that religious knowledge and secular knowledge are of two separate non-intersecting spheres; and the *integration* model which posits that both religious and secular knowledge are "by themselves, incomplete," "are both needed for full understanding, . . . have areas of overlap and are each informed by the other " (pp. 270-271).

By contrast, it seems that the closest that we get to being able to identify what constitutes the effectiveness of the impact of Lutheran higher education is the simple fact of whether or not an individual is a product of "the system." For example, in a decade of Synodical placement work, I sense, at times, that the most important qualification that a Lutheran teacher can bring to the classroom is their "Lutheraness" and that when I sign a Call document, I'm guaranteeing the genuineness of the product. It would run completely counter to my own commitment to Lutheran education to give any appearance of diminishing the concern of a principal, lay leader, or pastor that the candidate to whom their congregation extends a Call is anything less than well prepared to occupy the office of the Lutheran Teacher. But how many lists of standards (important as they are) or how singular an understanding of Lutheran theology (vital as it is) will prove a demonstrable, operationally defined quality that one can call "uniquely Lutheran"?

While we have trouble identifying ourselves, I fear that we are likely fairly recognizable to others outside the denomination and, unfortunately, not for the best of reasons. The stock in trade of Lutherans seems to be our tendency to isolate,

fragment, and qualify knowledge by way of continual attempts at "outing" each other as liberals, moderates, confessionals, and other shades in the spectrum—we've all read the material on either side—and lining up our opinions with the theologian of choice, living or dead. In recent years, C. F. W. Walther has seemed to have somehow pulled ahead of brother Martin himself for being considered the most Lutheran Lutheran. (Our separatism and divisiveness are more commonly known, and potentially embarrassing, than we may think. For example, I sat next to a woman at Wrigley Field last summer who, even though she and her late husband had moved away from Chicago in 1969, still spent a weekend on her own each summer in the "friendly confines," flying in from the west coast to stay in a downtown hotel and catch a Cubs home series. In casual pre-game conversation we discovered each other's church affiliation. She was Episcopalian. However, when I mentioned that we were Lutheran, she minced no words in asking if we were members of the "big" branch of Lutherans [ELCA] or the "one of those others that fight with each other").

At one extreme are those for whom preserving "pure doctrine" has become the focus of the Church at the expense of having nowhere to go with it.

Along with doctrine, their emphasis is on preserving

Lutheran education seems to be bound up in measuring the degree to which our graduates have undergone successful indoctrination, rather than in how well they demonstrate the process of living and thinking, in doctrine.

a Lutheran "heritage," a mix of theology and "ethos-centricity," a preservation of homogeneity seemingly at all cost. On the other extreme are those who perhaps see doctrine as hindrance, i.e., just get 'em in the door and maybe later on we'll tell 'em who we really are. Oversimplification? Perhaps, but at times it seems as though we can't decide whether we want to be the church of open arms or pointed fingers.

Given that atmosphere, the task of equipping church workers and lay leaders with some kind of identity becomes all the more challenging. Why? I think it is because, while we settled long ago on central doctrines of what makes being Lutherans so . . . Lutheran, that position gives us what amounts to more of a toehold than a beachhead in the real war for souls in the world. The arguments seem to be less about basic doctrine than they are about practice: worship, ordination, the Lord's Supper, ministry, and relationships with other church bodies or even with the world itself, as

we have seen since September 11, 2001. We know more about what we claim to be rightful practice and spend a lot of time watching the other person to see how tightly he or she will hold to a similar claim. The carryover to Lutheran higher education seems to be bound up in measuring the degree to which our graduates have undergone successful *indoctrination*, rather than in how well they demonstrate the process of living and thinking, *in doctrine*. But instead of being an obstacle, perhaps this situation provides a jumping off point for the challenge of defining a “Lutheran way of knowing,” as opposed to a “Lutheran way of being.”

Carl Jung is purported to have said, “I’m glad I’m Jung, and not a ‘Jungian’ because I can still change my mind.” Similarly, I’m not a theologian and don’t pretend to be such. I’m just a Lutheran teacher with some fancy letters after my name and can therefore feel free to toss out some thoughts without claim that they establish a doctrinal position. In actuality, they’re simply questions from a teacher who happens to see an interesting connection between knowing and believing, certainly a recurring theme in Scripture. I’ll leave the necessity for rightness or wrongness to others in the course of conversation. What I’m interested in is framing the question so that perhaps we can find—or discover we cannot find—that quality of thinking that we can say is distinctive (not “better,” mind you) in Lutheran higher education; that question that goes beyond and gets at the heart of what it means to have been educated in the context of Lutheranism.

I now move from observable surface behavior to that which forms the well-spring of substantive philosophic/theological thought and context, i.e., those questions that surround the problem of identifying a Lutheran “way of knowing” and that have arisen largely through my involvement in teaching in the area of psychology. As a discipline that has involved itself in attempting to describe human behavior, psychology tends to be in the crosshairs of those who suspect it of shady intent, or even worse, of flirting with humanism. And it’s from that standpoint that I think it might be interesting to start a conversation among those of us who call ourselves Lutheran educators at all levels. If we’re to be about the business of knowing, and teaching others how to know, maybe it’s up to us then, to come up with some questions that begin to identify how we know what we know and how that common thread of thinking helps us to convey to others a powerful way of viewing this world and the one to come. In short, the beginning question might be: Is there such a thing as a philosophic/theological well-spring that might be called “Lutheran epistemology”? Even more precisely, is it useful to talk about a genesis of that epistemology, an origin of a Lutheran knowledge of the world that goes a step deeper than how doctrines or catechisms are structured, but is based on how people relate to,

use, and live with or without that knowledge? If we purport to try to teach students how to know their Lord from a particular viewpoint—saved by the grace of a loving Father who not only sustains us in our faith, redeems us by his Son, and keeps his promises to us—is there room in that perspective for discerning a measurable response by which we can actually identify those whom we teach by the way they think about such things? What does it mean and how does it look when what we can only now see is as “through a glass darkly,” knowing that at some point our knowledge of God will be face to face?

Empirical Truth and Revealed Truth

If we’re going to bring up the question of the origin of knowledge (i.e., genetic epistemology), it might be useful to begin that conversation from the viewpoint of defining two realms of knowledge: empirical knowledge and revealed knowledge. Simple enough, it would seem (and with apologies to Wayne Lucht, the colleague with whom I first discussed the matter).

As the basis of all things scientific, empirical knowledge, in its radical form, defines as “truth” only those phenomena for which there are observable and measurable antecedents. In psychological terms it is the basis of behaviorism, that proverbial stimulus-response cycle and its variations that come in two popular brands—Pavlovian (for dog lovers) and Skinnerian (for pigeon fanciers). (Jean Piaget, [1969] interesting as always, posited that the stimulus-response cycle was not linear, but circular, i.e., a stimulus cannot evoke a response, and doesn’t even qualify as such, if the possibility of a response is not present. There is, therefore, no possibility of the existence of a stimulus on its own.)

Empirical knowledge is always limited by the extent and capability of human sensory perception, but it can be extended by the mechanical possibilities created through technology, whether as simple as the telescope or as complex as something like global positioning technology. All empiricism must employ, at some fundamental level, sensory perception of some sort; it is, simply, the way in which the Created are able to view Creation. It changes; it can be hypothesized based on prior knowledge only to be supported or not in the process of logical application of newer and what we think are better technological measures. Sensory perception can also be wrong, as the heliocentric view of the solar system opposed the earth-centered viewpoint, the latter supported by the Church of Galileo’s day (and, according to a source as incontrovertible as my “Far Side” desk calendar, on the books as its official position until 1993—apparently there were some who wanted to be really certain of this). From the empirical standpoint, then, it can be said that there is no objective truth; today’s

“truth” may be tomorrow’s earth-at-the-center-of-the-universe argument.

Revealed knowledge is what God lets us know in order that we might be saved. Our relationship to it springs from the same internal place from which most of us have had to draw the answer to a child’s question on some matter of faith, such as what Jesus looked like. We don’t really know because it’s not important in the whole thread of Creation-Fall-Redemption that runs through Scripture. We know that God created the world; humanity fell away. And God acted through his Covenant to redeem it and all of us. It matters not what Jesus looked like; it only matters what was revealed through him literally as Word Made Flesh who was there at the beginning.

Revealed knowledge is infallible—God wouldn’t tell us something that’s not going to hold up in the long run—but it isn’t bound by observable phenomena. Peter’s post-Golgotha reaction to rumors of a risen Christ is the classic example. “If I can’t see him, put my finger in the nail holes and see the wound in his side, I won’t believe” was the ultimate “fish or cut bait” challenge of all time. And I think that Christ’s appearance to Peter and the exchange between the two of them ending with “blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” is the official parting of the ways between what was to become empirical knowledge and that of revealed knowledge, at least in western intellectual thought. It’s interesting to note, however, that Jesus did not openly reject Peter’s need to know, he just opened up the possibility that all of us need to hear, in effect, “winners need not be present” in that time in history to be saved. That we didn’t have to be there to be just as redeemed as Peter is essentially the point that drives faith from the human side, i.e., it’s all right not to have empirical knowledge of Christ’s Resurrection. It’s not because we know it or feel it; it’s because God did it. And that “proof positive” is not hypothetical. It stands on its own in spite of humanity’s poor efforts, at times, to lock it into that which we can humanly conceive.

Yet in spite of Christ’s own example of *not* confusing empirical and revealed knowledge, we continue to do so. In my own field, the notion of “Christian psychology” is a prime example, for two reasons:

1. It attempts to apply the qualities of revealed truth to an empirical process. Christianity, as revealed truth, is not a cause and effect proposition, and its logic is not the world’s logic. As the revelation over God’s time of the Creation, a broken and then restored relationship, it defies human understanding or at least western intellectual logic, specifically what humans might still see as a cause and effect relationship between God and humanity which would tend to negate grace. That sidetrack got the Church into some trouble for about 1,500 years, or so we Lutherans like to think. The last being first, loving one’s enemy, the meek

inheriting the earth, and a King born in a barn to a virgin all tend to stand the conventional wisdom of cause-effect thinking on its conceptual head.

2. Psychology describes the actions of a human being to a degree of validity and reliability that one's actions might be viewed as having antecedents and consequences, in a behavioral paradigm anyway. That kind of support or non-support of an empirical question would serve only to produce a sort of operationally defined works righteousness, I think. While that may, in fact, be applicable to some doctrinal viewpoints, let's not call them Lutheran. Grace, by definition, cannot be cause and effect.

The bottom line is that if one makes one's religion into a psychology or one's psychology into a religion, one is either holding God to a measurable standard or negating incompatible truth traditions, specifically the role of grace which is, of course, the fundamental basis by which we are reconciled to God.

Non-Secular People in a Secular World

When our oldest daughter left home last fall to attend a large state university, I left her with the reminder that although she was going to a secular school, she is not a secular person. Our parish pastor, who is a phenomenal gift of God to our congregation, also advised her to find a group of Christians as soon as possible, to hook up with them in order to keep a Christian perspective on life at the "big U." Through the grace of God, she did so within just a couple of weeks, admitting, however, that the first time she went to the Lutheran campus ministry center it was because they offer laundry facilities to students at less cost than those in the dorms, with dryers that actually work. (Kinda' gives new meaning to that old hymn, "Oh for a faith that will not shrink . . .")

The point is, her life as a Christian on a secular campus is an exercise in Martin Luther's recurring theme of paradox. She won't be, and hasn't been, sheltered from all of the possible slings and arrows of living in that environment and has already had to do some pretty fast growing up. What she *knows* about how life works, both from a Christian home and Lutheran education, will get her just so far. What she *believes* about what her life means through what God reveals in Word and Sacrament, seeds planted in the latter environments chosen by her parents, will not fail her in the environment that, as a young adult, she chose for herself. Empirical knowledge will serve her well in the classroom; revealed knowledge will serve her well in the moments and hours when she has to put it into the big picture, beyond degree requirements.

Although some still wish it otherwise, we are non-secular people in a secular

world. My house is in a secular neighborhood, and I have a secular drivers license in my wallet. To be neither in the world nor of the world simply doesn't work, and more important, it doesn't seem to be what God had in mind either. If the original plan had held up, there wouldn't be another world to be "of," i.e., we would have existed in an Eden of the pure face-to-face revealed knowledge of God. Doctrine, I daresay, would be a different matter entirely because the Word would be present in its pure, revealed form and would speak to us face to face as experienced by Adam. Truth has since been veiled by sin, necessitating the poor attempts of humanity to discern it using the only means available, those that are humanly created and humanly understandable. God owns revealed truth and all possibility, even birth by a virgin; humanity owns empirical truth and can only try to imagine and describe all possibility. We inevitably meet with failure but that doesn't stop us from the historic denominational arguments about whose failure was closest to a mark that cannot be humanly defined anyway.

So, how does one describe all of that to a world that is bent on a cycle of learning how to self-destruct more

efficiently and which seems to continually reinvent problems that we thought our empirical know-how had solved?

There is certainly a circular quality to human knowledge when we

watch in horror as airliners

are turned into flying bombs using the equivalent of a stone-age weapon, a box cutter, and we become newly afraid of a disease like smallpox whose eradication had once been viewed as a blessing and lately seems to be a liability. How does the circularity of empirical knowledge possibly mesh with the linearity of revealed truth? The view of Creation by the Created will certainly return to and be repeatedly stopped short by the same limitations, while what God has revealed to us cannot be hidden again.

Even as Piaget's thinking has influenced the development of other epistemic systems, perhaps there is application here as well. Returning to Piaget's circular relationship between stimulus and response (the idea that a stimulus cannot evoke a response if the possibility of a response is not present, thereby negating the possibility of the existence of a stimulus on its own), the thought does occur that perhaps the receptivity of people to revealed truth does not exist where the fallibility of empirical truth has not shown it to be necessary. And since that possibility cannot

God owns revealed truth and all possibility, even birth by a virgin; humanity owns empirical truth and can only try to imagine and describe all possibility.

be completely sustainable under humanity's free will, i.e., not everyone is going to understand their need for God in the same way, God actively demonstrated and set revealed truth in motion, while also pointing to the necessity for salvation, by the observable, understandable sacrifice of Christ.

Paradox: A Starting Point for Lutheran Higher Education

So where does that leave my exercise in framing questions and what does all of that possibly have to do with Lutheran higher education? For starters, I think that one of Martin Luther's most interesting, but under emphasized contributions to theological thought was his notion of paradox. We are at once sinner and saved, slave and free, in the world, but not of it. Instead of exchanging the chains of sin for the chains of works righteousness, we are free to know, act, live, breathe and have our being in robust ways which allow us to explore the world and are the source by which we can freely invent the empirical knowledge that helps us to understand it as best we can. Nothing is out of bounds in terms of what we can know, question or dream up. But through all of that we know that our existence and the entire context of our relationship with God has less to do with what we know, but everything to do with how he knows us, and that his knowing us is wrapped up in loving us. Given that, a discipline like psychology (where I make my academic home) is an interesting, empirically driven discipline that may delve into and describe some of the common or not-so-common attributes of humans and the worldly condition in which they find themselves. However, the descriptors that the discipline comes up with are imperfect and can never adequately describe our humanness, originally created in a very good way by a very gracious God. What makes people so interesting and variant, even deviant, is our business, and we can create countless variations on the ways in which we think it is so. What brings us to the existence in which any of that can occur is God's business, and his is the last Word on the veracity of it all. However, he allows us the freedom from that infallible position either, by his grace, to give evidence that we know whereof it all came or to give evidence that we are quite capable of lousing things up on our own. And the context of Lutheran higher education is uniquely positioned to convey that very paradoxical pattern of thought, no matter what the discipline.

To bring it full circle, that stance allows us to be involved in the idea of what constitutes issues of justice, fairness, or harm from an active Christian conscience, to recognize that God has already established his Kingdom, but that democracy is not its temporal equivalent as there will always be aspects of the latter that are not Christian in their derivation. We live with them, but are not defined by them.

Paradox is the lens of revealed truth that gives focus to empirical truth but doesn't change the limited qualities of the latter. Understanding paradox relieves us of the delimiting tendency to demote the relationship between revealed truth and empirical truth to some grouping of unarticulated values. It is not limited to the status of a quality that we bolt on to Lutheran education to help in marketing the "product." Its uniqueness allows us to declare without apology that, beyond basic *indoctrination*, students *are* going to grapple with what life is really all about. And then we who are in the business have to go about actually wrestling with those issues that go beyond indoctrination. In other words, we can go beyond having all the answers, into living "*in doctrine*," and recognizing the important questions.

Brief essays such as this, thinking aloud on paper to one's colleagues, cannot possibly get at the universe of issues and questions that form the core of our purpose in educating people in a Lutheran context. On the other hand, I think that there is a distinct, unique, and very substantial place among all of the "ways of knowing" and models of faith and learning for what can be articulated as a Lutheran context. One could argue that such a position has been adequately defined in the Lutheran Confessions. No argument there. But where does the line between statements about what is believed intersect with *how* (not *what*) we know about the very act of believing? There is a cognitive structure there, the understanding of which would help to frame such a model so as to help to give some way of mapping the epistemological territory of what Lutheran Christians know and how. And while the lines I've drawn here are very likely in need of some shading or repositioning, I'm hoping that these "thoughts in progress" can contribute at least an ink spot to what needs to be writ large on the canvas that God has commissioned of all of us.†

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Athens *and* Jerusalem

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In a few minutes you'll receive your theological diplomas, certifying you as in all ways fit to undertake the calling of ministers of the Gospel. Early this afternoon, you'll receive your academic degrees, certifying you as university graduates. It's worth asking yourself, if you haven't already, what's the connection between the two?

This tension between academic experience and lived experience is closely related to the relationship between your calls to ministry and your classroom experiences here at Concordia. What are we to do with the not always easy relationship between learning and faith? We're certainly not the first to feel the tension. The last five centuries have seen ongoing struggles between science and religion, from astronomy to zoology. But the question is much older still. Already in the second century of our era, the church father Tertullian asked famously: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" That is, what is the relationship between the world of culture and secular knowledge and the world of faith?

Or again, to translate into your present situation: What shall I do with what I've learned over the past four (or five or six) years at Concordia University?

Why, in fact, should the church insist on higher education for its ministers at all?

Wouldn't you know, but the First Lesson to be read in many Christian churches tomorrow provides a helpful model to us, as we wrestle through these modern, yet quite ancient, questions. In the middle of Acts, chapter 17, the apostle Paul is being chased southward through Greece, when he comes to what was, at that time, the center of the world's culture—the combined New York, London, Paris, and, indeed, Chicago of his day. He takes his place where the leading thinkers tried out their ideas, historically called Mars' Hill, but functionally the University of the Roman World, and he delivered the speech that follows:

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Note four points in particular about Paul's approach to the Athenians. First, Paul spoke to them with respect for them and their culture. He praised them as "extremely religious in every way," albeit unfocused in their religiosity. He knew from the outset that few, if any, individuals are argued into a faith relationship with God. Faith is a matter that lies too deep for that, and the human mind is quite capable of recasting the whole of reality to fit with a conviction of faith. Take, for example, the leading failed faith experiment of the twentieth century, Marxist socialism. One of the early leaders of the Soviet version was Leon Trotsky, who served as the movement's theoretician. As one wag put it, Comrade Trotsky's farsightedness was proven by the fact that nothing he had predicted had come true yet. But to this day, roughly one-quarter of

the world's population is governed by those who subscribe to one version or another of Communist orthodoxy. No amount of rational argument will change the faith commitment of its devotees.

But how about our approach to proclaiming the faith? Do we recognize in the modern morass of borrowings from religions hither and yon and in the popularity of what bookstores label "spirituality" a genuine heart's cry for God? Or do we simply belittle and condemn such things as wacko and hopelessly wrong-headed? Are we tempted to think that we can argue or even browbeat our neighbors into hearing and accepting the Gospel? Or do we at least start out by crediting them with *good* faith, if not *true* faith?

People can't be argued into faith, but there is a definite role for rational argument in proclaiming the faith, and Paul knew it. And this gets at our second point. Paul spoke with respect for his audience, but also with a thorough knowledge of their culture. We know from the letter to the Galatians that Paul was learned in Jewish law and tradition, but we see from his example in Athens that he was what we'd call these days "bi-cultural." He knew Greek literature well enough to quote at least one and perhaps two classical poems. His purpose was to link the people's unfocused yearning for God with the God of heaven and earth. But he did so using the Athenians' own literature. He quotes a poem by Aratus that we actually have in its entirety—I know, because I had to translate it in college—a poem that contains the line, "For we too are his offspring."

Do you know what those whom you will serve are reading? And have you reflected on our common culture enough to consider where there might actually lie a hook for the Gospel? Consider three particularly easy examples, easy because they all deal in their own way with issues of faith and reality beyond the empirical: Harry Potter, *Lord of the Rings*, and "Star Wars." We are flooded with great raw material. We can ignore it. We can condemn it. Or we can use it to bring Christ to people in the twenty-first century.

How does that "hook for the Gospel" work? That's the third point I'd have you see from St. Paul, the master preacher and teacher at work. He builds on the poetic citation to turn his hearers away from what they think of as God—namely, idols and images—to the "God who made the world and everything in it," who is not confined to shrines and temples (or churches, for that matter). His description of the true God and of God's work in the world is essentially what Lutherans would call "First Article theology," that is, a focus on God as creator and sustainer of all that exists.

When you think about it, that makes a lot of sense, because everyone everywhere connects in some way to the created world. Think about it a moment more and you realize that as we try to connect people with the true God in this way

we're putting to use the whole range of the liberal arts. Not just the sciences, but also the humanities, are deeply connected with the world as we know it. What you've been studying in art or music or physics or communication or whatever subject is worth studying for its own sake, but it's also at least potentially what the church fathers would call the *praeparatio evangelii*, the "preparation for the Gospel," opening hearts and minds to their need for something more than the world can give.

That's certainly how Paul uses what he knows, and that leads to the fourth point. At the close of his address, he moves from First Article to Second Article, from creator and creation to redeemer and judge. While he never mentions Jesus Christ by name—actually, he's interrupted before he can—he does call his audience to repentance in the name of the Risen One.

Of course, those with whom you deal know all about Jesus Christ—or do they? We today are working in a different culture and with nearly two millennia more history. Some of those years include events and people that need to be overcome, if the Gospel is to be fairly heard. It is not only our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters who have been victimized by unfaithful shepherds. And still other leaders have done what is as bad or maybe even worse, presenting the Christian faith as boring or in terms so far removed from people's lives as to be irrelevant. The Reformed theologian Karl Barth had it right: we have to preach and teach with the Bible in one hand and today's newspaper in the other. That again is at the heart of the mission of a Christian liberal arts university.

Much has indeed changed since Paul's day, but one reality has not. Each person is still born with a God-sized hole in their soul and a vague sense that something is missing. Our task, like Paul's, is to make the unknown known and to help people do better than grope and stumble for the truth.

We are called, in other words, to help people to find their way—and it's worth remembering that "The Way" was in fact the earliest name for the Christian movement in the book of Acts. We help others, but we do so constantly mindful of three realities:

1. We, too, are travelers on the way. We have not yet arrived.
2. We, too, sometimes grope and stumble. We are never beyond the need for repentance, deliverance, and direction.
3. We, too, are called to use our minds and all we've learned and can learn for the sake of leading others to salvation.

That's a lifetime's task. It's why you can never stop reading, never stop learning, never stop growing, never stop seeking the truth, even as you proclaim the Truth.

May God give you strength and wisdom for the way.†

Public/Private: A Concept for Action

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This article is the result of a journey that began 25 years ago when I was serving as pastor of a congregation and administrator of a Lutheran school in Queens, New York City.

The issues and problems people faced required some action. These issues were not the normal items on the church council agenda; they were the items of discussion before and after the meetings. Often people felt the church couldn't help them. Consider some of the problems: one of our elders was notified that his homeowner's insurance was being canceled. He never had a claim in over twenty years; he just lived in the wrong zip code. A mother complained about the open selling of drugs outside the middle school two blocks from the church. The neighborhood was experiencing a growing trend of arson for profit in business, and the burned out remains became a safety concern. These were real needs.

In addressing these issues, it became clear that the action required was beyond what one individual acting alone could accomplish. I had given my time to advisory groups only to be overruled. I had

responded to one crisis after another, only to find no clear path of action. If we were to help individuals and families and maintain a healthy community so that families remained in our neighborhood and church, a new approach was necessary.

This new approach was found in organizing with other religious institutions to use our combined strength to act as a multi-issue, multi-neighborhood, and multi-cultural organization for the sake of families and churches and to act on our beliefs and values. For, if there are no families, no people, there will ultimately be no church.

This realization led to the development of the Queens Citizen Organization, which represented over 300,000 people and to my subsequent involvement in the initial development of the Nehemiah Housing Project in Brooklyn, before it was ever called Nehemiah.¹ Critical to the development of this broad-based community organization and congregational involvement in it was a change in thinking from an orientation of social service to that of accomplishing social change and to an understanding of how one must function in the public and private arenas of life within the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

From Social Service to Social Change

The church has always accomplished social service. We have a good track record in caring for people at various times in their lives and in times of crisis. We provide medical care, food for hungry people, and comfort for those who hurt. We know the story of the Good Samaritan who helped the victim of the robbers. What would happen, however, if the Good Samaritan found a victim of robbery every day? Would he begin not only to treat the victims but also try to prevent the growing number of victims by seeking ways to make the road safe?

There are far too many victims, families who are struggling to raise their children consistent with their values only to be outdone by the decisions made by others. They become victims of forces beyond their control. The church offers only Band Aids and coping mechanisms. We provide crisis hotline numbers and counselors to deal with the symptoms of the problems, or we encourage people to take individual action, which is doomed from the start, since these will end up in bureaucratic cul-de-sacs. We provide no way to address the systemic causes or have no power to create the needed change or to act on our values consistent with our faith. We can mount

¹ Space limitations prevent fully developing all the aspects of building a power based community organization. However, some instructive references are included at the end of this article for the interested reader.

strong corporate action for the unborn—and rightly so—but as soon as they are born they are on their own. Social services must be provided, but we must go beyond to address the causes that keep people in bondage and powerless.

Two Kingdoms

Lutherans emphasize the doctrine of the two kingdoms. The kingdom of the left, the kingdom of power, and the kingdom of the right, the kingdom of grace. This distinction is important, for each has a sphere of concern that is different. The individual Christian is in both. The kingdoms are not separate but in tension. We live and function in both. The delineation is not to create separate arenas, but to help the reader understand the operating principles of each.

The common view for many is that the only way the church acts in the kingdom of the left is to form

individual consciences and values in the minds of people and to encourage them to act responsibly in the public arena. In a democracy, for many this means only voting or working through the electoral system.

This approach may still work in small communities where the

values and outlook are all the same, but it is inadequate in a large, diverse metropolitan area where various special interest groups have their agendas. It assumes that issues in the public arena are resolved on merit or the rightness of the solution, whereas in most cases they are decided on the basis of who has the power. While voting is indeed a great privilege, in a day of media-made candidates, a vote does not provide accountability. After Ed Koch was elected mayor of New York City, he told our organization that since it was no longer an election year, he didn't need to be accountable. He had only been in office 60 days. The Queens Citizen Organization never endorsed candidates. We were not in electoral politics. What we sought was a working, accountable relationship with whoever was elected. You gain this relationship based on power. Please note that power is not a negative word. It is the ability to act or accomplish something. Powerlessness means being incapacitated.

The common view for many is that the only way the church acts in the kingdom of the left is to form individual consciences and values in the minds of people and to encourage them to act responsibly in the public arena.

In addition, many issues in the public arena involve the private business sector. The decisions of major businesses about where to invest or divest have more effect on families than many of the decisions of elected political leaders. Voting has no impact on these decisions, but developing a mutual reciprocal relationship provides that opportunity to develop solutions to problems affecting all. The public arena works on the revised Golden Rule: "He who has the gold makes the rules."

The Public and Private Arenas

The key to understanding the ways the church can work with families in addressing issues is to understand the public and private arenas of life. Let me contrast some of these areas. Please remember these spheres are not separate, but in tension. We function in both domains.

Public	Private
In the public arena, we relate on an institutional basis. Relationships are open; they are professional and formal. Institutions or negotiation sets boundaries.	In private, relationships are close, intimate, caring and supportive. There is a vulnerability in the family quality of the relationship.
Depersonalized: Relationships allow for direct confrontive dealings.	Personal: Relationships foster indirect confrontation and caring ways that support and encourage.
Power: Relationships are based on who has power. The more power, the more likelihood that results are achieved. There are three sources of power: knowledge, organized money, and organized people.	Blood: The blood relationship holds families together. Even the most wayward family member is still family.
Diversity of Values: There is a smorgasbord of values for people to pick and choose.	Common Values: There are similar core values and beliefs.

Public/Private: A Concept for Action

Self-Interest: What is in one's own interest. The opposite is not altruism, but suicide. You cannot get your self-interests met apart from the neighbor.	Self-Sacrifice: Denying one's self. In family we are willing to give up or forgo things for the sake of others.
Quid Pro Quo: "Something for something." Making deals and compromises in order to get some of what you want.	Merit: Fight for the rightness of the matter. Hold firmly to your position. Everything is an absolute.
To Be Respected: The key in public life is to have the opposition respect you. If one wants to be liked, one will not survive. For many, Christianity is a matter of being nice, and so we get very little respect.	To Be Liked: We want to be accepted and liked for who we are. We will avoid offending others in order to be liked.
Accountability: Our desire is to hold people accountable for their decisions and actions, especially elected leaders.	Favor: We do favors for those we care about. We act out of kindness.
Act: We initiate and take action; others react to what we do. The action is in the reaction. It is not what we do, but how people react.	React: We respond to those closest to us. The needs and concerns of others set our agenda.
Direct: Confront or exploit the opportunity.	Indirect: An attitude of care and concern.
Law: Ruler/expectations. The power is in the hands of those who make the rules and then change the rules to their advantage.	Gospel: Free unmerited gift. God's love in Jesus Christ empowers action consistent with the Holy Spirit's leading.

One cannot operate effectively in the public arena with the "private" style. You can be as loving and kind as you want, but you will not be heard. You can have the best argument for your position and be ignored or dismissed as one voice crying in the wilderness. If you have no power, no organized people standing together with you, you will not succeed in addressing real problems. Many give up, and often the

church has set them up for defeat by encouraging them to act alone. The church withdraws into the world as it should be rather than energizing the world as it is.

An understanding of the public/private continuum is helpful when you operate in the public arena. If you can't separate yourself from the private, you will not be able to function. Most elected officials seek to keep their private life private and learn to allow the public reaction to flow over them. They don't take it personally.

The ability to gain power and seek accountability leads to reciprocal relationships. The aim in organizing is to use combined strength in fighting for family, to effectively empower those who sit at the negotiation table where the deals are made to fight for the family on significant issues.

The same understanding of public/private can be applied to the church as a human institution. The church, as the body of Christ, is on the private side. The church, as an institution, is on the public side. We are public. We have public worship; we are a public institution under

corporate law. We have the Office of Public Ministry; we have public presence in our community.

The difficulty is that we use the language of the private in our public relationships. We refer to

ourselves as "the family of God" rather than the more public "community of God." We ask people to do us a favor rather than seek accountability. Consider how you ask people to do a task in the church: "Do me a favor?" We want to be liked rather than respected.

You know the tension if you ever had to fire a volunteer. How do you hold people accountable and yet maintain a relationship? You have to function between the private and the public to be effective and yet care for people.

Why is it that people in business can argue and discuss issues in a heated, passionate way and disagree and still go out to dinner afterward, while in the church disagreement often leads to open warfare and bitter feuds? It's because we cannot separate the public and private, and everything becomes personal and threatening.

There is the tendency in the church to move issues from the public side to the private side. In some of our schools or churches, we have difficulty supervising or

Often the church has set people up for defeat by encouraging them to act alone. The church withdraws into the world as it should be rather than energizing the world as it is.

Public/Private: A Concept for Action

holding staff accountable. We are often pushed into the position of doing a favor; otherwise the staff person implies that one is not kind or caring, or their friends line up to seek a favor from us on their behalf. We get pushed to the private side when the issue is really on the public side on issues of accountability.

When I served on the Atlantic District staff, I met with congregations to determine their mission support from the district. It was clear that I was in a public relationship, one of accountability. Very often the congregation was operating on the private side—asking for a favor, telling me to be kind and nice to them. The tendency was to push me to the right. They wanted a favor, i.e., give them the money they needed, and often they would get influential people in the District to also operate on the private side and undercut any attempts at accountability.

When one engages the “powers and principalities,” the prayer life of the church takes on new significance. Prayer is focused on real issues, and the nitty gritty drives us to prayer. Bible study is not just a matter of learning facts or Bible history, but a searching of Scriptures to come to grips with the issues of our community, so that our actions are informed and shaped by our faith, and that faith drives our actions on behalf of families.

The results in the community life and the benefits to the church only come when one is engaging the real issues. As the Lord said through Jeremiah: “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7).[‡]

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The Responsibility to Teach: Is It Rightfully Assumed by the Modern Nation-State?

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In their 1964 curriculum guide, Noll and Meyer give the traditional view of Lutheran schools and the modern nation-state:

The New Testament knows of only two educational agencies: the home and church. At the same time Lutherans are members of society and recognize government to be a divine institution rightfully claiming their willing obedience and support. Moreover, the Lutheran recognizes that a state with a republican form of government and a democratic way of life needs an educated citizenry and therefore rightfully assumes the responsibility to teach. Such recognition results in the Lutheran's willingness to support and improve public (state) schools. On the other hand, Lutheran home and church reserve and exercise the God-given right to maintain their own schools because only through such schools can the home and the church effectively discharge their God-given

responsibility to educate. (p. 1.3)¹

In this brief defense of the church's "God-given responsibility to educate" is an assertion that the modern nation-state "rightfully assumes the responsibility to teach." How this assertion became a presupposition of modernity, and whether it should continue to inform Lutheran pedagogy, will be the focus of this essay.

Education in the Bible

In the Scriptures, "education" is for godly wisdom; specifically, the knowledge of God: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov 1:7). Education in the modern sense of "technical knowledge" was reserved for an elite few. It was exceptional (and God-guided preparation for later leadership) that "Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). What was expected of all was that, as they grew in their own knowledge of God, they taught this godly wisdom to their children:

Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. . . .

Assemble the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children. (Dt 4:9-10)

The critical "educational" dyad was "learn and teach:" "You shall impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul. . . . And you shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Dt 11:18f).

The New Testament involves no substantive change in the pattern, as Jesus

¹Allan Jaksman (1960) had made a similar assertion regarding the biblical pre-eminence of the family in education: "Luther and his followers have written a great deal about duties or obligations of parents and also about their rights and authority. . . . [T]hey all agree that the basic institution for the teaching and training of children is the home or family, that parents, especially fathers, have the first responsibility, for the education of their children and that the teaching and training of children according to God's will is the highest responsibility of parenthood" (p. 25). Jaksman (p. 26) also cites a statement by the American Lutheran Church (1954) which reiterated this historic Lutheran position: "Responsibility for the education of their children belongs to the parents. God entrusts children [first of all] to parents, not to the nation."

reaffirmed the “educational” mandate in his Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Mt. 28:19f). It was said of the early church that it was devoted to the apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:42) and Paul commended the Romans (6:17) for having become “obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.” Paul warned the same Romans against those who taught contrary to that which they had learned (Rom. 16:17), and in Ephesians he identified teachers as among those who helped to build up the body of Christ so that it would not be “carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (4:11, 14). Only in this way could the church be equipped for its missionary enterprise of preaching and teaching;

that is, only on the basis of strong internal teaching was there a foundation for reaching out to others.

Medieval and Early Modern Education

Although the church early assimilated pre-existing Graeco-Roman

educational ideals, it did so within the Biblical understanding of God’s grace and salvation. Christian education was distinguished from pagan education, which sought to bridge the gap between man and God: “Christianity took issue with this notion of the sacred character of education. For the Christian, education could neither make man truly virtuous nor unite him to God, and any claims to the contrary were perilous to the soul. The heart of the Christian position was thus a distinction between the aims of education and the end of man” (Bouwisma, [1975] 1990, p. 377).

Universities were created within the church in the middle ages during the synthesis of Aristotle’s “natural” philosophy and Scripture. Medieval education was “secular” in the sense that its wisdom could never be equated with spiritual wisdom: “Christian education is necessarily secular because, for the Christian, the most important capacity of man is his ability to respond to the love of God; and since this response depends on grace, it is beyond the power of education.” The church valued education for “its capacity to civilize” but not for its capacity to “endow men with . . . holiness” (Bouwisma, [1975] 1990, p. 377f). Therefore, we must draw the “paradoxical conclusion that the roots of modern Western secularism are themselves engaged in

Paul identified teachers as among those who helped to build up the body of Christ so that it would not be “carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:11, 14).

religious soil, that Christianity itself was one of the most powerful forces sponsoring the process of cultural differentiation whereby the realms of nature, of society, and of man were progressively desacralized and the dominion of religion pushed back to the uncolonized frontiers of the modern consciousness" (Oakley, [1974] 1988, p. 211).

The church throughout the middle ages controlled education. However, this medieval monopoly fractured in the Renaissance with the emergence of a new alliance between lay authorities and humanism, since most humanists worked outside the supervision or control of the church. "The Renaissance dispensed the layman from clerical guidance. . . . Because of the work of the humanists, the Church was losing its advantage" (Stephens, 1990, p. 226f). In a sense, the church's educational philosophy was coming full circle. That is, if the true purpose of education was to "civilize" and not to "sanctify," then why did the church have to control it? This question, considerably more complex than it first appears, still haunts the pedagogical discourse of the church.

The Renaissance humanists still presupposed the Christian world-view as they, nevertheless, turned their attention to what could be known and understood from the human point of view. And yet, the seed of the modern debate was sown. More than merely unleashing clerical control of education, the Renaissance humanists also removed the study of man (*studia humanitas*) from biblical studies. From then on, man would be analyzed on the basis of human reason and not by divine revelation.

The Reformation reflected the revolutionary forces of the Renaissance. Luther survived execution after the Diet of Worms largely because his prince fulfilled the Renaissance ideal of a Christian prince who would stand up to the church when it was wrong. More importantly, Luther benefitted from humanist contributions to biblical studies and saw popular literacy as the foundation for reading and applying the Scriptures. Luther urged compulsory public education for boys and girls in religion and the arts.² Following Luther's lead, Philipp Melanchthon organized a pervasive

²Steven Ozment (1983): "Lutheran theology subjected parents and children to a divine plan in both their domestic and their religious life. This plan enjoined on each clear moral duties, the fulfilment of which would create a higher bond between parent and child than that of their natural relationship; faith was thicker than blood. This was one reason why in Lutheran lands public schools so readily took over the education of children. In urging magistrates to provide compulsory education in religion and the arts for all boys and girls, Luther reminded parents: 'Your children are not so completely yours that you have no obligations to God on their behalf; God has his rights in the lives of your children; they are more his than yours (*sie sind auch*

system of public education in Germany, earning the designation *Praeceptor Germaniae*.

The post-Reformation irony was that Melancthon's masterful educational reforms also gave "imprimatur" to a discipline which had already signaled that it was willing to proceed without regard to traditional theological presuppositions. In spite of Luther's intense personal animosity toward Erasmian humanism, with all of its doubts about the "clarity" of Scripture, later Lutheranism "helped to perpetuate the humanism that had played a key role in its evangelical breakthrough and had become so important to the development of its theology. In other words, Lutheranism institutionalized humanism, at least for its own purposes" (Rosin, 1992, p. 134).³ While Lutheran theologians trained in the *studia humanitas* certainly remained committed to traditional Lutheran doctrine, their method "tended to separate life from intellect, heart from head, and faith from belief" (Kittelson, 1992, p. 156). A shift was underway from the biblical "wholism" that had characterized Luther's theology toward the modern distinction of "spheres" ("public" and "private") for reason and faith.

The Enlightenment and "Tolerance"

Although current research has emphasized the diverse manifestations of "Enlightenment," the traditional view continues to provide important insights:

In this interpretation, Enlightenment was a desire for human affairs to be guided by rationality rather than by faith, superstition, or revelation; a belief

mehr sein denn dein). Hence, they also belonged to those public officials who guided them in the realization of God's plan for their lives" (p. 153).

³Rosin considers the institutionalization of humanism within Lutheranism as a generally benign if not actually positive development, treating it in the Renaissance context of "replanting Eden." Rosin (1992) states this theme—which will resurface continually in the modern world as a goal of scientific reason—quite clearly at the conclusion of his essay: "Though fallen, creation was also redeemed and must not be surrendered. The believer expressed *contemptu mundi* not by fleeing the world for a monk's cell, but by living daily life. Abandoning the garden only lets the weeds grow" (p. 135f). This optimistic outlook for "redeeming" the world is quite different from the traditional, more paradoxical, scheme of biblical eschatology. It is also more characteristic of Reformed theology (which descends from the humanists Zwingli and Calvin) than of Luther.

The Responsibility to Teach

in the power of human reason to change society and liberate the individual from the restraints of custom or arbitrary authority; all backed up by a world view increasingly validated by science rather than by religion or tradition.

(Outram, 1995, p. 3)

The watchwords of the Enlightenment were: “rationality, not tradition; happiness in this life, not salvation for the next” (Stark, 1965, p. 55). Some historians have repudiated the notion of the Enlightenment as “modern paganism” by “pointing to the complex and often far from hostile relationship between the churches and the Enlightenment” (Outram, 1995, p. 6). Christian teachings of the “sanctified life” and the “new creation” were at times synthesized with Enlightenment notions of progress, particularly in America which was described by its founders as “a new order of the centuries.”

While the Enlightenment thinkers’ recovery of the critical philosophy of the ancients may be traced to the Renaissance, “it was modern philosophers who taught them the possibilities of power” (Gay, [1966] 1977, p. xi). Unfortunately, power—indeed, emerging *state* power—is a theme largely unexplored in most studies of Enlightenment ideology. However, for Habermas ([1981] 1989) the creation of “public spheres” was the signal development of the period; spheres that “from the systemic perspective of the state . . . are viewed as the environment relevant to generating legitimation” (p. 319). Of course, when religion loses its traditional role of state legitimation, it is relegated largely to the “private sphere” of the family.

The emergence of state power during the Enlightenment coincided with the “new religious idea, that of toleration, which was possibly its most important legacy to succeeding centuries” (Outram, 1995, p. 34). It is the modern notion of “tolerance” that undergirds the rapid growth of the modern nation-state. Before the Enlightenment, governments were characterized by the authority of persons (kings, princes, etc.) and usually the loyalty of citizens was local. After the Enlightenment, authority increasingly came to be associated with nation-states. This important transition could only be accomplished with the simultaneous management of the thorny problem of religious confession which long had vexed Europe where, since the Reformation, “the religion of the ruled” had been “the religion of the ruler.” Tolerance was required by growing bureaucratic states in order to pacify populations of mixed confession.⁴

⁴Prussia took the lead in implementing official religious toleration. Prussia had a Calvinist king governing largely Lutheran subjects. As Prussia expanded, incorporating large numbers of Roman Catholics as well as more Protestants, it

While the United States may seem to many (including some “founders”) a quintessentially “Christian nation,” the religious heritage of America is as much tolerance as its putative Christianity—a result of its unique synthesis of Christianity, Enlightenment, and democracy.⁵ In America as in Europe, tolerance was crucial to creating unity out of diversity. At the time of independence—since “there was no uniform ethnic stock, no binding rituals from an established church, no common fund of stories, only a shared act of rebellion”—Americans “had to create the sentiments of nationhood which other countries took for granted;” in fact, they “had to invent what Europeans inherited: a sense of solidarity, a repertoire of national symbols, a quickening of political passions” (Appleby *et al.*, 1994, p. 92). Indeed, tolerance was such an integral part of the very fabric of the new nation from the outset that “the American experiment can be viewed as a national embodiment of pluralism and persuasion as much as it is of freedom” (Guinness, 1993, p. 270).

While most founders were personally religious and deeply concerned about the vitality of Christianity in the new republic, the Constitution insured that the state remained officially neutral. In the founders’ eyes, this was as much a blessing as a curse: “Coerced religion, they were persuaded, was an impediment rather than an aid to genuine faith” (Reichley, 1985, p. 107). The founders intended that the state should not take sides in denominational squabbles so that religion could be freely exercised in the United States, a right guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution. However, there would “be no tolerance for the intolerant.” The founders “insisted that the principles of democratic government must be returned to and consulted even

implemented the “modern” solution of official religious toleration. That Prussian tolerance also could be “intolerant” was demonstrated early in the nineteenth century with the formation of the Prussian Union Church. An ostensibly ecumenical arrangement designed to unify the Prussian kingdom, this “union” forced Lutherans to adopt Calvinist Communion practices. Some staunchly Confessional Lutherans resisted, were persecuted, and emigrated to America. There they participated in founding the Missouri Synod (wherein the charge of “unionism” remains a nasty epithet to this day!).

⁵Henry F. May (1976, p. 361): “What was usable [of the Enlightenment] was assimilated. . . . Whatever has survived has had to be accommodated to the other and older source of American culture: Christianity in its myriad and shifting American forms. And perhaps even more difficult: in America the Enlightenment has had to be combined with democracy.”

though the consequences might be harsh for certain points of view, some merely tolerated and not respected, others forbidden not respected" (Bloom, [1987] 1997, p. 500). The Mormons, for instance, have not been allowed to practice polygamy; tolerance of religious practice does not extend beyond a general consensus regarding the "common good."

By mid-twentieth century, "tolerance" had become almost a "religion of civility." By World War Two, mass communication and increased mobility weakened attachment to place and local culture.⁶ Increased desire for social unity (what William Graebner [1991, p. 70] called a "culture of the whole") resulted in the insistence that all good Americans subscribe to the creed of democratic tolerance. "The first notable effect of the war was that, by making the need for national unity more compelling, it intensified efforts that were already underway to cut down on prejudice, improve intergroup relations, and promote greater tolerance of diversity" (Gleason, 1992, p. 164). Ostensibly pluralistic and tolerant, this religion of civility nevertheless required "believers in different religious faiths to moderate their public claims to exclusive possession of the truth, extend de facto recognition of others, and thereby implicitly acquiesce in the reduction of their own faith-position to one among many" (Gleason, 1992, p. 257). Yet, this "civility" never existed in isolation but always served "the religion of national unity and legitimacy" (Guinness, 1993, p. 228).

This religion of civility in modern American culture seems to have affected even conservative Christians, who may continue to subscribe to exclusivistic truth-claims but are increasingly inhibited from expressing them. Where once such claims had wider cultural significance, the requirements of the common culture now privatize them, in the spirit of democratic tolerance: "In short, to reinforce the traditional symbolic boundaries of orthodox Protestantism would require Evangelicals to operate defiantly against these social and cultural constraints. They would have to publicly invoke and rigorously apply the 'harsher' and more 'offensive' symbols of their faith"

⁶Anthony Giddens (1991): "In conditions of later modernity, we live 'in the world' in a different sense from previous eras of history. Everyone still continues to live a local life, and constraints of the body ensure that all individuals, at every moment, are contextually situated in time and space. Yet the transformations of place, and the intrusion of distance into local activities, combined with the centrality of mediated experience, radically change what 'the world' actually is. This is so both on the level of the 'phenomenal world' of the individual and the general universe of social activity within which collective social life is enacted. Although everyone lives a local life, phenomenal worlds for the most part are truly global" (p. 187).

(Hunter, 1987, p. 184). As a result, "the significance of the twentieth century for American Evangelical Christianity is the deterioration of [its] cultural hegemony in America" (Hunter, 1987, p. 191).

This does not mean that conservative religion in the modern world is dying. To the contrary, it has thrived precisely because it has been "privatized"! The very notion "that one's hopes should be private rather than public was likely to make a good deal of sense to many Americans. In some respects, evangelicalism . . . [was] remarkably compatible with some of the central features of modern American society" (Watt, 1991, p. 81). Notably, modern Evangelicalism thrives in the consumer culture of modern America because it is "therapeutic" and "psychological"; so that one might even say that it is a new faith "that owes as much to modern psychology as to Paul" (Watt, 1991, p. 154). Moore (1994) wonders, "Where are the real prophets? Can there be any in a country whose self-image rests on fast, friendly, and guiltless consumption?" (p. 276). And so, while many people may continue to be religiously active in the modern world, it should be noted nevertheless that "the traditions come to mean something different than they did for previous generations of the faithful" (Hunter, 1987, p. 240).

The Ideology of American Public Education

It was such powerful homogenizing and relativizing forces of modernity that also translated education into the public sphere from the private spheres of family and church. In so doing, however, the religious implications that had accompanied education for centuries were transferred to the public school. For many Americans "the vision of the Kingdom of God does not simply affect the American common school; the common school is an embodiment of it" (Meyer, 2000, p. 208).

Horace Mann's original goal for a "common school" was not grounded in the need for public literacy but in the vision of a unified, democratic nation. In the public school the virtuous American citizen would be molded: "Only through universal public education could the children of the expanding nation learn mainstream majority values as well as core knowledge, which was deemed necessary to introduce children to the best sources of wisdom from the past while preparing them for the sober responsibilities of life in a free society" (Reese, 2000, p. 15). Also required was a state-supported system of teacher training colleges. With them, the public schools could become what Mann's contemporary, James G. Carter (1826), called "an engine to sway the public sentiment, the public morals, and the public religion, more powerful than any other in the possession of government" (p. 49).

Since the creation of a "common culture" in the modern nation-state impels the

educational system (Brown *et al.*, 1997, p. 3f), the Unitarian Horace Mann originally envisioned a stripped-down, generic Protestantism at the core of that culture: "This kind of religion—Mann called it the 'religion of heaven'—belonged in the schools, for without it they could not effectively carry out their primary task, moral formation" (Gleason, 1992, p. 258f). Rushdoony ([1963] 1972) labeled Mann's vision "messianic" and provided the following excerpt from Mann's 1841 *Common School Journal*:

Other social organizations are curative and remedial; this is a preventive and an antidote; they come to heal diseases and wounds; this to make the physical and moral frame invulnerable to them. Let the Common School be expanded to its capabilities, let it be worked with the efficiency of which it is susceptible, and nine-tenths of the crimes in the penal code would become obsolete; the long catalogue of human ills would be abridged; men would walk more safely by day; every pillow would be more inviolable by night; property, life and character held by a stronger tenure; all rational hopes respecting the future brightened. (p. 29)

Yet, the focus had shifted from training in *faith* (however much Christian values may have remained in the curriculum) to training in *citizenship*.

After Horace Mann, the chief architect of the link between American education and democracy was John Dewey, "the high priest of American public philosophy" (Neuhaus, 1984, p. 23). Dewey called the teacher "the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God." What he had in mind was "the formation of the proper social life" in which the teacher "is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth." The end or aim of the public school, for Dewey, was this participation in social life with education as "the fundamental method of social progress and reform" (Dewey, [1897] 1929, pp. 6, 15, 17). Dewey viewed public schools as "religious" institutions to the extent that public education inspired the personal growth and unity of a democratic people.

Critical to fulfillment of Dewey's goal for education was its emphasis on democratic tolerance, including an *intolerance* for the exclusivistic manner in which American Christianity traditionally presented itself: "I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic division to which supernatural Christianity is committed" (Dewey, 1934, p. 51f). Although formally disavowing Horace Mann's generic Protestantism, Dewey was able to preserve Mann's messianic vision by imbuing the socialization of the child with religious significance. "With respect to their understanding of the broadly 'religious' aims of

public education—personal development of the individual meshing with social improvement and national cohesion—there is not just analogy but straightforward continuity between the positions of the two men” (Gleason, 1992, p. 263).

That public schools, through most of their history, did not create a “common culture” was not for lack of trying. As Walters (1978, p. 210) concluded, this failure was due mostly to “the overwhelming regional and sociological complexity of the United States and because of the weakness of the classroom when it comes into conflict with the student’s family life and peers.” Only by mid-twentieth century did modernizing America reach a point where the public school might indeed purvey the common culture that Mann and Dewey had envisioned. Educational theorists finally saw the opportunity for a total “reconstruction” of American children. Boyd Bode (1943), a disciple of Dewey, wrote: “We must face the fact that democracy in this modern world is no longer the simple concept that it was in earlier times, but that it involves the reconstruction of the whole mass of the traditional beliefs and attitudes and practices, so as to become the basis for a distinctive way of life. Such reconstruction obviously becomes a primary obligation for education” (p. viii). And so, after World War Two, there was a flood of government, particularly federal, educational initiatives. As a result, by the end of the twentieth century, “faith in the public schools had become gospel. The articles of faith were a jumble of beliefs that public schooling was the social glue holding the country together, an all-purpose solution to any national problem, and a personal ladder for the climb to success. That melange of popular beliefs had become a secular religion” (Cuban and Shipp, 2000, p. 3).

Public education serves the modern state. Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler (1905) once wrote: “The highest type of individual life is found in community life. Ethics passes into or includes politics, and the education of the individual is education for the state. . . . The state is the completion of the life of the individual, and without it he would not wholly live. To inculcate that doctrine should be an aim of all education in a democracy” (p. 109f). This statist pedagogy may have contributed to the sobering assessment by Guinness (1993): “The modern state already resembles the medieval church far more closely than the modern church does” (p. 383).

The “Culture Wars” and the “Two Kingdoms”

For many, the so-called “battle for the schools” is rooted in the conviction that “the assumptions of modern public education concerning the nature of man, the function of the state, the nature of truth, and so on are such as to inculcate a set of presuppositions that can only be called religious” (Schlossberg, [1990] 1993, p. 211).

More broadly construed, however, what is “at stake is how we as Americans will order our lives together” (Hunter, 1991, p. 34). That is, “schools are the primary institutional means of *reproducing community and national identity* for succeeding generations of Americans” (Hunter, 1991, p. 198), and so it is not surprising that many Americans, Christian or not, are concerned about what is going on in America’s schools. One should note carefully that the “battles” today occur on many levels for many different reasons.

One of the things often overlooked in the contemporary debate over “secular humanism” in the public schools is the purpose for which the public schools were created in the first place: the fabrication of a more unified and cohesive nation-state. Lack of attention to this purpose—especially, in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist

attacks—will impair meaningful consideration of the role for private, nonpublic education in the modern world. And so, while we will not want to embrace Horace Mann’s errant religious notions, we must come to grips with his profound grasp of education’s unifying role in the modern nation-state. It

“Faith in the public schools had become gospel. The articles of faith were a jumble of beliefs that public schooling was the social glue holding the country together, an all-purpose solution to any national problem, and a personal ladder for the climb to success.”

would be a great mistake for Lutheran educators merely to indoctrinate our children in “the faith of the fathers” without also imparting essentials of the “democratic creed.” American Lutherans, for instance, will not finally gain what we want for ourselves unless we also contribute to what we all need as Americans. How exactly we do that is the great challenge of the twenty-first century.

Several proposals for “voucher” funding of private schools have gained a wide following among neo-conservative thinkers and many in the private school community in recent years. Neo-conservatives support such proposals largely for the decentralization of the educational monopoly and the introduction of competition which they believe cannot help but improve the quality of public schools: “‘Public’ is now the center of all evil; ‘private’ is the center of all that is good” (Apple, 1997, p. 596). For churches, the benefit would consist largely in the “free exercise” rights of

the First Amendment, since “many features of the modern educational system make more sense if one sees schooling as constituting a religious system rather than as an instrument of concrete social functioning” (Meyer, 2000, p. 210). For parents, the benefit would consist largely in the means by which the average parent realistically could consider an alternative to the “free” public school.

While these proposals have met with the expected opposition of vested interests within the educational establishment, they also have been subjected to thoughtful critiques. Two of the most significant objections share a common presupposition. One major objection to public funding for private schools is that they perpetuate the racial and class structures of society. It is suggested that educational “choice” is but “a new ‘opportunity’ for the middle class” (Ball *et al.*, 1997, p. 420). While students of parents in lower classes also benefit, they do so in an almost “separate, but equal” environment of the old South.

A second major objection focuses on the frequent failure of public school critics to pursue the “common good”: “By default, our preoccupation with the economic purpose of schooling and management solutions thrives, becoming the irreducible common ground on which both Afrocentrists and religious fundamentalists can agree.” In this environment a preoccupation with “markets, management mandarins, and economics” too frequently ignores “a clear-eyed appreciation of the civic benefits of urban life in our democracy” (Shipps, 2000, p. 104f).

What both of these objections have in common is the presupposition of modernity: that we do indeed inhabit one modern nation-state and that we all must treat each other with civility. If every student goes to separate private schools with idiosyncratic curricula, how will they learn to live together? “Without a shared vision (however contingent or provisional) of democratic community, we risk endorsing struggles in which the politics of difference collapses into new forms of separatism” (McLaren, 1997, p. 530). Presumably, the United States government would not allow Osama bin Laden to establish a system of terrorist schools in America after the September 11 attacks. Yet, such an attack on the American way of life is both obvious and superficial. The values that promote a viable democratic community are as fragile as they are intangible. More is involved than teaching children basic skills, or even the “faith of the fathers,” especially if in so doing we instill in them an intolerance of our fellow citizens.

There is a strong need for educators to promote “tolerance” in a modern democratic nation-state and the “common good” may of necessity be “pluralistic.” Yet, the public square must not become intolerant of religion or its free exercise: “To do justice to social diversity without doing injustice to national unity is not simple.

To do justice to the conflicting demands of differing conceptions of the transcendent without doing injustice to either national unity or social diversity is hardest of all" (Guinness, 1993, p. 233). When post-modernists question the imposition of "totalizing discourses," this cuts both ways in the public square: "Who has the power to exercise meaning, to create the grid from which Otherness is defined, to create the identifications that invite closures on meanings, on interpretations, and translations?" (McLaren, 1997, p. 528). Neither Christians *nor secularists* should forcefully impose their hegemony.

"Two Kingdoms" theory provides at least a working model for us as Lutherans. Unlike most of Christendom, we are comfortable living with a church/state "paradox" in which "the normative principles of the church are faith and love, while the normative principles of the civil order are reason

and justice" (*Render Unto Caesar*, 1995, p. 35). The medieval Roman Catholics and the Reformed envisioned an ideal "Christian Commonwealth" in which the state also served the Lordship of Christ. Not so with Lutheranism. For Confessional Lutherans,

Lutherans are comfortable living with a church/state "paradox" in which "the normative principles of the church are faith and love, while the normative principles of the civil order are reason and justice."

Christ and his Church speak "most appropriately through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. While this is certainly "public" speech, it is also spiritually persuasive, rather than temporally coercive, for it is addressed to those with "ears to hear" (Matt. 11:15; cf. 13:11-17)" (*Render Unto Caesar*, 1995, p. 91).

Luther saw that Christ "is a king over Christians and rules by his Holy Spirit alone, without law . . . all for this reason, that Christ, without restraint and force, without law and sword, was to have a people who would serve him willingly" (*LW* 45:93). Luther's emphasis was on persuasion because "heresy can never be restrained by force. . . . Here God's Word must do the fighting. If it does not succeed, certainly the temporal power will not succeed either, even if it were to drench the world in blood. Heresy is a spiritual matter which you cannot hack to pieces with iron" (*LW* 45:114). Civil governments, for Confessional Lutherans (*AC* XVI), "were instituted and ordained by God for the sake of good order," because "the Gospel does

not teach an outward and temporal but an inward and eternal mode of existence and righteousness of the heart." In fact, according to the Lutheran Confessions (*Ap XVI*, 3), God expects us "to obey the existing laws, whether they were formulated by heathens or by others, and in this obedience to practice love."

With these useful insights, we can live more tolerantly in a secular world. Modern Lutherans have a solid foundation to live, as early Christians did among their pagan neighbors, "with gentleness and respect" (1Pet. 3:15). Yet, we must discern how to be "civil" without succumbing to the "religion of civility." This will include speaking to social issues with conviction in the public square, but with good reasoned argument (as appropriate for civil government in a pluralistic society) and not only with religious fervor.⁷ While America benefits from Christians who do not retreat from the public square, those Christians need to translate the faith that motivates them into a reasonable public philosophy: "Civility is both an attitude and a discourse shaped by a principled respect for people, truth, the common good, and the American constitutional tradition" (Guinness, 1993, p. 255).

So then, does the modern nation-state "rightfully assume the responsibility to teach?" Not necessarily. "Two Kingdoms" theory may support an ethic of "civility," however dangerous and challenging that can be to the maintenance of a traditional faith, but it does not resolve the question of whether the state should assume the value-laden "right to teach." We certainly can agree that a modern nation-state must "provide for" the education of all its citizens. But whether, for instance, the nation-state should be restricted instead primarily to funding and monitoring a more pluralistic, even predominantly private, educational system is a complex political question. It is a question properly decided by reason and constitutional law that should be debated by the citizens who all have a stake in the outcome—the common good of their democratic republic.✠

⁷Neuhaus (1984) emphasizes the need for religious leaders (and, by implication, their followers) to remain engaged in the American "public square:" "A critical part of our problem today is that the state increasingly uses its power to undercut the institutional role of religion and to withdraw recognition from religion as a significant actor within the democratic process. . . . If religion is not the strong institutional actor that democracy requires, however, the blame is not to be placed only upon those who are hostile or indifferent to the role of religion. At least equal responsibility rests with religious leadership—at all points on the political spectrum—that is not alert to the singularity and urgency of our historical moment" (p. 165).

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The Responsibility to Teach

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Time Stays, We Go

When we began as teachers, the end of each school year represented another year of professional growth, another year of getting better at our trade. With each passing year came new knowledge about what worked in the classroom and what didn't. We were accruing more and more experiences to draw upon later. Each year meant fewer youthful mistakes. It represented an ongoing shift toward maturity. Our apprenticeship was over. We were on our way. We weren't sure where we were going, but we were getting there in a hurry. Time's passage was our friend.

At some point in life, however, an educator views the passage of another year with less enthusiasm. It may no longer represent a further increase in professional skills. As the years pass, the novelty of working in the classroom is replaced by the repetition of mundane tasks. The vibrancy of youth becomes the staidness of a middle-age mindset. The confidence of youth gives way to the self-doubts of age. As people age, the temptation to no longer try new things or to no longer take risks becomes greater. The term "status quo" takes on a positive connotation.

Time has a way of giving and of taking away. The poet Austin Dobson once observed, "Time goes, you say? Ah no! Alas, time stays, we go." Time moves on, whether we want it to or not.

Principals observe the cycle of the school year being replayed year after year. A new group of students comes in the fall and leaves in the spring, only to be replaced by another group the following fall. A school calendar is planned, the events take place, and a new calendar is planned for the coming year. The cycle continues. Is there a point to it all?

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, who refers to himself as the Philosopher, mulled over the nonstop nature of time. His study of it yielded some depressing reflections. After a series of familiar phrases—"A time for birth and a time for death, a time for planting and a time for harvesting, a time for sorrow and a time for joy"—he questioned the point of life itself. The expression "all is useless" was used a total of 25 times in the twelve-chapter book. Much about life and the inexorable passage of time led him to wonder about its purpose. The same is true for people today.

But certainly there is a point to life. Time marches on toward a purpose for those who use it constructively. The passage of time serves people, not vice versa.

I was privileged to work for many years with a pastor who stayed young. His body may have aged a bit over the years, but

his mind and his attitude didn't. He refused to give in to the eroding effects of time. He began a doctoral program in his mid-fifties. After receiving his doctorate a few years later, he kept growing. He loved to discuss the nuances of current events. New ways of looking at things intrigued him. His sermons were wonderfully perceptive renderings about life in God's world. He kept an open mind about things, refusing to take the "we've always done it this way" approach. He enjoyed the interchange of ideas with others but also relished the time he had to himself in private study. He knew how to blend the maturity borne out of years of experience with the enthusiasm of youth. He understood that age is defined more by attitude than by chronology.

People spend much effort in attempts to save time. Obviously, though, time is never really "saved." The seconds tick by no matter how we spend them. The point isn't to save time but to use well the time we have. There is much to be said about using time efficiently. Time is crucial to principals. There just aren't enough hours in a week to attend to all the tasks for which a principal is responsible. The real question, it seems, is *why* we're saving time. Will Rogers once observed, "Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save." Saving time merely to give us more time to be busy for the sake of being busy is pointless. There needs to be a purpose for our time. The Philosopher put it this way in Ecclesiastes 4:6, "It is better . . . to have peace of mind than to be busy all the time with both hands, trying to catch the wind."

So how can we best use the time we have? Some observations:

First, time spent with people, particularly students, is time well spent. A principal's primary role is not to stay busy or to finish his work. It is to help people.

Second, if a principal is going to help others, he needs to help himself by getting enough rest. He occasionally needs to force himself to push away from the stack of chores on his desk. There needs to be a balance in life. Principals aren't responsible for the whole world, only a small corner of it.

Time spent in solitude provides a needed perspective. It allows us to see ourselves better. It allows us to see others better. It allows us to commune with the Lord. It allows him to commune with us.

Time needs to be spent in savoring our achievements and the successes of those around us. It's a common malady among principals to work hard to achieve something, but then to be so busy laboring on the next challenge that they fail to appreciate what was accomplished.

Time spent enjoying the humor and ironies in life is time well spent. They are the desserts of life.

Lastly, time is to be cherished. It is not the enemy. The yearly cycles of life provide a rhythm, a structure. Even the Philosopher, as negative as he was at times, concluded that life and its abundance are to be enjoyed without undue worry about its length. So principals and teachers continue to work in his kingdom in the time he gives them to do so. Time is a gift from God.✠

Walking the Tight Rope . . . Discovering the Art of Balance as a Child of God

The recently published *Ethical Guidelines for Directors of Christian Education* (2002) state that one of the important values that a DCE should exhibit is the ability "to balance personal and professional life effectively" (p. 3).

The following principles of the profession reinforce this value:

Principle 2.01 "The DCE manages himself or herself in such a way as to maintain an appropriate relationship with regard to time commitments between personal, family, and professional responsibilities."

Principle 2.05 "The DCE, single or married, creates a balanced and healthy family life." (p. 4)

I don't know what comes to your mind when you read the principles listed above. Perhaps, you feel that you are in a constant battle to try to live a balanced life. Or maybe you would rather stop reading this article than admit that you need to address this issue in your life. I know for me it has been a journey of successes and failures.

The Reality

It was May 20, 1998, and I struggled to move as I rolled over in bed. It had now been six weeks since I had been diagnosed with mononucleosis, and I was not improving. I was frustrated, angry, and confused. How could God allow his faithful servant to be sick for this long? There were people to see, classes to teach, youth to visit and summer trips to organize. *Why* was I still in bed? *Why* wasn't I finally better? *Why* did I get sick in the first place? These questions constantly continued to reverberate through my mind. I begged God to heal me. But, unfortunately his answer was that I wait. Why couldn't he just say the word and I would feel better? I knew that he could, but apparently I had to learn a few things first.

As I worked through my anger and bitterness, I realized there was no one to blame except myself. Finally, I asked the question, "How did I get here?" As I honestly examined the past nine years of my ministry, I realized that my life had been completely out of balance. With no family waiting for me in the evenings, it was easy to fill my whole life with ministry activities. As I lay in bed, I

realized that I desperately wanted to discover who I was outside of ministry. Did I exist on this earth to be more than a DCE? What about my love for God's creation or my love for music and the arts? What about my dream to be married and have a family of my own someday? All of these desires had been placed on the back burner to the ministry.

Something happened to me during those four long months of being bedridden. I learned that "being" was just as valuable as "doing." I learned that God's Word provides the daily strength that I need to rejoice in any circumstance (even another day in bed). I also learned that God did not call me to fix the world at my own expense. Rather, he called me to a life of freedom through the gift of his son's death and resurrection. As a result, I am empowered to love him with all of my heart, soul, and mind and to love my neighbor as I love myself.

In their book *The Sacred Romance* (1997), Brent Curtis and John Eldredge describe this journey of discovering balance in our lives through the power of a love relationship with Jesus Christ. They point out that God longs to console, encourage, and empower us as we experience his love through Christ. Unfortunately, Eldredge and Curtis point out,

Starting very early, life has taught all of us to ignore and distrust the deepest yearnings of our heart. Life, for the most part teaches us to suppress our longing and live only in the external world where efficiency and performance are everything. Busyness substitutes for meaning, efficiency substitutes for creativity, and functional relationships substitute for love. Communion with God is replaced by activity for God. There is little time in the outer world for deep questions. Given the right plan, everything in life can be managed . . . except for the heart. (pp. 7-10)

God longs to meet us in the depths of our being, but we are too busy to even notice the love letter he has sent to us.

The German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer addresses similar issues in his book *Life Together* (1954). He writes, "The person who comes into a fellowship because he is running away from himself is misusing it for the sake of diversion, no matter how spiritual this diversion may appear. You can't escape from yourself; for God has singled you out. Only in fellowship do we learn to be rightly alone and only in aloneness do we learn to live rightly in fellowship. The day together will be unfruitful without the day alone" (pp. 76-78). What about you? Are you avoiding yourself by running to care for the community? What are you running from?

The Gift

In her book, *I Am Lonely Lord—How Long* (1998), Marva Dawn points out what is waiting for us when we do stop, even if it is in the midst of great pain and loneliness. She introduces the Hebrew word *chesedh*, which is translated "unfailing love." The

psalmist is crying out to God in Psalm 13 and asking, "How long, oh Lord, will you forget me forever." But then he remembers the promise of God's unfailing love! When we finally make the choice to stop running, we may feel alone. But, even in the emptiness, God's promise of his unfailing love in Christ is waiting for us. Dawn writes, "The nature of *chesedh* is that God will never withdraw his support from us. It may seem so when he does not grant us what we ask or take away our interminable sorrow, but his infinite wisdom and love are always present with us and on behalf of us" (p. 5).

Regardless of where you are at on the tight rope of life in ministry, God's *chesedh* is with you! Daily as you remember your identity as his child you can *be encouraged* knowing that he walks with you through your hectic days. Be challenged to set boundaries so that you take time to get to know yourself and your family. Remember that you are more than a DCE; you are a child of God!†

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"It is difficult to conceive of a teacher who was at a loss what to do with himself during the summer when summer school, informal study at home, and problems and projects in school and church beckoned him, besides the refreshing stimulus of the great outdoor world given to us by God. May it be said of our profession that we are scholars and that, according to Jean Paul Richter, 'A scholar knows no ennui' ('Ein Gelehrter hat keine Langeweile')."

H. D. Bruening, *Lutheran Education* 85.1, September 1949

What Can They Do? What Do They Know? Competency in the Arts

A significant goal for our students in almost any subject area is to develop competence. We strive to help those in our charge to reach a level of functioning so that they are prepared for higher levels of learning, their lives are enriched, they reach greater depth of knowledge and skill, and there is greater meaning to their experiences and quality to their contributions to their communities. We want every child to have the opportunity to reach her potential. Developing competence seems obvious when one thinks about the study of math, language arts, reading, science, or social studies. The curriculum, materials, plans, and instruction for each of these areas reflect this goal. A focus on competence does not seem to be the general mind set, however, when thinking about and planning for student learning in the arts.

Study in any of the fine arts in our schools is realized in experiences and production far more often than as competency-based with goals of skill development, content knowledge, and a curriculum that builds and expands each school year. Arts in the schools are commonly conceived of as “doing stuff” and sadly, in the minds of many, that seems to satisfy coverage of this area of human development. But what is being learned? Is anything really being taught? Do students have a greater depth of knowledge and ability in art, music, drama, or dance in the upper grades than they did in the primary grades or just a broader collection of experiences?

For all four areas of the fine arts, the national standards published in 1994 still guide schools and teachers to improve their fine arts curriculum. Every state has learning goals and standards for K-12 instruction that include learning goals for the arts. In most cases, states use nearly verbatim (or with minimal alteration) the standards from that 1994 document as their own. In each area of the arts, there are standards that address unique aspects of learning and skill development for K-4, 5-8, and 9-12 grade students. There is also a section of the document that addresses overall goals for arts instruction. This section cannot go unnoticed when reviewing a school curriculum. How well prepared are our students? The standards ask that “students should know and be able to do the following by the time they have completed secondary school”:

- **They should be able to communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines—dance, music, theater, and the visual arts.** This includes knowledge and skills in the use of the basic

Educating the Whole Child by Jean Harrison

vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of each arts discipline.

- **They should be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art form**, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency.
- **They should be able to develop and present basic analyses of works of art** from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, and from combinations of those perspectives. This includes the ability to understand and evaluate work in the various arts disciplines.
- **They should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from variety of cultures and historical periods**, and a basic understanding of historical development in the arts disciplines, across the arts as a whole, and within cultures.
- **They should be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.** This includes mixing and matching competencies and understandings in art-making, history, and culture, and analysis in any arts-related project.

As a result of developing these capabilities, students can arrive at their own knowledge, beliefs, and values for making personal and artistic decisions. In other terms, they can arrive at a broad-based, well-grounded understanding of the nature, value, and meaning of the arts as a part of their own humanity.

A child must have the opportunity to discover her own artistic voice, to develop and nurture it as she grows. All children must have quality instruction in the arts throughout their schooling. They should have the chance to work in different areas of the arts at different times. Some of what is best about learning in the arts is that it is for *all* students. Abilities develop at varying rates, but within an arts learning context there is a place for everyone to be creative, to learn, to increase their skills, to perform, and to express. To develop competence means to develop the ability to use knowledge and skills for creation, performance, perception, analysis, appreciation, and criticism, and to understand history, culture, and aesthetics. Children need to begin from their first year in school to have real learning experiences in the arts and have that learning build in a logical way throughout their schooling. Most important, this needs to be done with quality, both in instruction and in materials, in every lesson, in every rehearsal, for every performance and project, all along the way.†

For further information on arts standards, contact:

National Standards for Arts Education

Consortium of National Arts Education Associations

MENC, Reston, VA, 1994.

What It Takes

They gathered from 40 states and six countries. Planes, cars, buses, trains, and limos were all modes of transportation required by 4397 individuals to move in to Minneapolis for three days in April. Teachers, administrators, exhibitors, presenters, spouses, executives, professors, DCEs, pastors, and guests lined the halls of the convention center, the lobbies of the hotels, and the streets of the city. They met around 430 tables in a massive hall, in groups of all sizes for 190 sectional topics, in small clusters with coffee or juice in hand, and with long-lost friends at the escalator entrance. They prayed, they sang, they listened, they ate, they spoke, they asked, and they responded. Hugs, smiles, hand-shakes, waves, theme shirts, and buttons characterized the expressions of fellowship and community at the 2002 LEA Convocation.

The gathering of over 4000 servants in one place was truly inspirational. At every turn, it was evident that God has indeed blessed the ministries of his people called to service through Lutheran education. Young and old, experienced and “fresh,” energized and tired, they became one body. The celebration of ministry among so many dedicated individuals was not left in Minneapolis. Each participant went home a bit more energized, Spirit-filled, educated and committed to continuing the “good race.”

This type of experience does not happen nearly often enough. The joy and fulfillment that comes from gathering with fellow ministers of the Word cannot be duplicated. Lutheran educators find many ways to join together during the year at the local, regional, or state levels. When thousands of individuals can join hands in worship once every three years, it is a special blessing. But what did it take for so many teachers, DCEs, administrators, and special participants to journey so far and gather together for this unique event?

Most of the stories will remain unknown. For an effort such as this in most schools, a great deal of sacrifice was necessary. Budgets had to be adjusted. Extra funds needed to be raised. Priorities were changed. The commitment of boards, parents, and congregations were evidenced through allocations of money for an event that most of them would not even attend. In support of its staff, resources were somehow made available to allow Lutheran educators from every region to participate. Large or small, urban or rural, countless individuals from all types of communities were responsible for “doing what it took” to make something worthwhile happen.

Today's Lutheran Educator

by Jonathan Laabs, Executive Director of the Lutheran Education Association

One story is representative of many. By the time final registrations were due in spring, the faculty from Concord Lutheran School had all but lost hope of attending this year's LEA Convocation. One of the two supporting congregations had been experiencing severe financial hardship. Despite the fact that the money for the 10-member staff to attend had already been budgeted and the days on the school calendar were cleared, the principal's long-standing hope that everything would work out was dwindling. Several individuals questioned the stewardship of proceeding when the necessary funds were not readily available.

As the financial situation became even more critical, the principal (who himself was scheduled to speak at the Convocation) had to finally resolve that attending the gathering was not going to happen. The Board agreed. Alternate professional growth opportunities for the two days were prepared. The word about the financial constraints causing the faculty's absence from the Convocation spread.

Less than a month prior to the event, the principal was in the first grade classroom reading a story to the children. There was some type of commotion in the hall, but he couldn't determine what it was. When he finished the story, he went out and found that two families had taken it upon themselves to underwrite the cost of the Convocation for any teacher that had taught one of their children (covering six of the ten faculty members). It was decided that since about half of the expenses were now covered, the staff would "pool" these funds so that all could attend and "find the rest of the money somehow." The teachers were deeply moved.

Last-minute preparations were made to register without formally identifying a source for the remaining funds. Within one month of the Convocation, the principal received a phone call at home. A Concord parent expressed his concern that the staff was still in need of the required funds. The parent was informed that the PTL had \$750 left in their budget, but that they would still be \$1250 short. He informed the principal that his company would underwrite the remainder of the cost! In the following weeks, additional donations made it possible for the principal to cover the teachers' extra Convocation expenses. In fact, donations in excess of the costs were applied to other uses.

The principal has indicated that his staff came back from the Convocation "just glowing". Their participation was made possible by the generosity of individuals who were thankful for the ministry of Lutheran educators at Concord. What does it take? On the surface, there was little any one person could do to make this possible. The challenges were overwhelming. For this school, and for hundreds of other places of ministry, the work of Lutheran educators is made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Concord's staff has a new perspective on the petition "Thy will be done." God will provide if we only trust in Him. That's what it takes!

(The school's story has been adapted from an account by Concord's principal Garry Falcone.)✠

“How Ya Doin’?”

Just this morning I was greeted by no fewer than five people during a breakfast meeting with the greeting, “How ya doin’?”

Now perhaps I need to hang around more articulate people, but I would guess that you also are often bombarded with this common saying during the course of your day.

And what if we would really tell folks how we *really* are doing? What if, the next time you asked that question, the person would remark, “Hey, I’m glad you asked me. Let’s sit down and talk about it!” If you are like me, you would probably feel like saying, “Look, I really don’t care how you are. I just said that because I didn’t know what else to say!”

Remember the TV ads that also make light of the phrase, “How ya doin’?” It has become one of the most often-used remarks in the history of the world—and even among Lutherans, no doubt! I just cannot picture Dr. Luther starting his sermons in that way, but . . . who knows!

But really, how *are* you doing? Not a bad question, if we’re willing to listen, and willing to share. Let me suggest that one response that we as God’s people can make is, “I’m doing well, in the Lord!” Or, as an elderly friend of mine likes to respond, “I’m amazed!”

For we really are “well” in the Lord. Even when we do not feel like it, or look like it, or even act like it, the Lord has made us well, in the death and resurrection of Christ! That’s what we celebrate each day in the Lord! Wellness is a gift of faith from the Lord. Through the Word and the Sacraments, we are well because we have received eternal life, starting today, and every day!

This is not to suggest at all that we mask the sin and pain in our lives. It does just the opposite. It affirms that we can proclaim and know that the sin and pain in our lives have been conquered by Christ in his death and resurrection for us. No need to pretend that all “is well,” when our lives and feelings say otherwise. We can confront our problems and frustrations and down days honestly and openly with ourselves and others, because we *know* that our Redeemer lives! (Now wouldn’t that be a great hymn for someone to write some time!) We need to talk out loud to others, both about our “Good Fridays” and our “Easters.” This is a strong part of being *well* in the Lord.

Multiplying Ministries

by Rich Bimler

Check out Isaiah 50:4: "The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught." Wow, great words from our listening Lord!

So, let me ask you again, "How ya doin'?"

May the Lord continue to bring wellness to our lives each day as we share and as we listen to each other, and as we proclaim, "I'm well, in the Lord!"✠

Guidelines for Submissions to Lutheran Education

Lutheran Education aims to publish the best research and reflection on a wide range of topics relevant to Lutheran Christian education. The journal welcomes manuscripts addressing Lutheran educators at all levels, from early childhood to university, in the classroom or in the parish. First consideration is given to articles which provide theological perspectives on Lutheran education, explore issues specific to Lutheran education, or discuss the implications of recent educational developments for Lutheran education.

1. **Submission Format:** The preferred form in which to receive manuscripts is on an IBM compatible disk (MSWord or WordPerfect format is strongly preferred). Manuscripts may also be submitted by e-mail (either as attached files or as e-mail messages). Please use as little formatting as possible in typing the manuscript: avoid multiple fonts, headers and footers, bold face, etc. as these must be removed in preparing the manuscript for print.
2. **Length:** Manuscripts may range from about 2000-5000 words. The editors reserve the right to request modifications.
3. **Style:** Style and spelling in the journal are governed by the most recent edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) and *Webster's New International Dictionary*.
4. **Documentation:** Citation of supporting quotations should follow the most recent edition of *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Address manuscripts, article proposals, or queries to: Dr. William Rietschel,
Concordia University, 7400 Augusta Street, River Forest, IL 60305-1499
E-mail: w.rietschel@curf.edu.

Which Prize Do We Value More?

One of God's leading rivals for the Israelites' affections was the false god Baal. A similar competition—a friend calls it “ball worship”—continues in our Lutheran schools today. It occurs when our flesh elevates a program, say basketball or drama, to a position of importance beyond its prime purpose in a Christian learning community. The program becomes an end, rather than a means to a greater end. Now, some will argue that we need successful, excellent programs to draw students. Such a view indeed casts extracurricular activities into a supporting role. Unfortunately, this purpose for their existence in our schools, too, falls short of the true mission of a Christian school. I wish to present an apologetic for extracurricular activities in our schools—a theology of extracurriculars. After establishing the big picture, I will try to show how such an understanding can guide discussions covering adding, dropping, evaluating, and staffing.

The foundational question is, what is the primary purpose for extracurriculars in our school? To discover this, we must rediscover the school's mission statement and apply it. My school's present mission statement can be summarized as “developing disciples of Jesus Christ.” I can think of no clearer Scriptural text than Ephesians 4:11-13: “It was he who gave some to be . . . teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Extracurricular activities are excellent training grounds for this primary purpose of Christian education. They are places to practice being the Church. In other words, each should be designed to be a place where the mentoring disciple (coach, advisor, etc.) shows and tells the younger disciples how to love God and their neighbor. Extracurriculars are laboratories where we implement the “theory” we hear about in Bible class. They are bond-building times where relationships are deepened between mentor and disciple and disciple and disciple. Make no mistake, it is in these activities that young disciples will observe the mentor most closely to see how he or she walks. And they will inevitably see us trip and stumble into the ditch of the flesh. Such humbling, teachable moments provide lessons of repentance and forgiveness. Matthew 18, I Corinthians 12, and a host of other Scriptures can come alive for the young disciple during a

Secondary Sequence

by Craig Parrott, Denver Lutheran High School

season—if the mentor is focused on his or her prime purpose and not distracted by a lesser prize. A fellowship that rejoices together and weeps together can be formed in an after-school activity as participants learn to handle fear and hope, frustration and satisfaction, disappointment and success in a Godly manner. Drills for submission and sacrifice occur daily. Opportunities to put the interests of others above our own are plentiful—especially for mentors who share facilities!

Such continuous workouts will soon deplete our own resources and lead us to the good place where we must rely solely on God's grace and mercy and love to flow through us. Extracurricular activities provide superb lessons on biblical principles: here we can learn that we reap what we sow and that God's grace is sufficient and that his power is made perfect in our weakness. Here, too, the young disciple's own idolatry of the activity can be gently brought to light by a mentor who once struggled—and perhaps still struggles—with the same good fight.

A view of extracurricular activities as places where we disciple young ones by living in Christ and walking by his Spirit has far reaching implications for how we operate in a Christian learning environment. First, such a purpose does not “just happen.” Brothers and sisters in Christ need to spur one another on to love and good works. Coaching meetings can take on whole new dimensions as we remind each other of the prime purpose and as we brainstorm ways to “coach Christ” in mutual conversation and consolation. Second, such a purpose hopes to reach as many as possible, in an effective manner. Therefore, the programs should probably draw as many young disciples as possible but with a careful eye on the number of mentors who can reasonably make meaningful contact with a young disciple. Since building Christ-exalting relationships is the key to disciple-making, it follows that the ratio between mentors and disciples should be held in check. Third, in hiring mentor disciples we must now ask, do they subscribe to the primary purpose of the school and pledge to pursue it in ever-increasing ways? Fourth, we need new ways to evaluate programs. A dynamic, excellent program by the world's standards could be failing miserably at our primary purpose; worse, it could even be counterproductive.

This view of extracurricular programs—as places where students are disciplined to know and grow in Christ—can easily collide with worldly expectations of parents, students, and even colleagues and so must be communicated on every page of the parent handbook, at every player-parent meeting and every coach/advisor gathering.

As you can see, a Christian school is well advised to offer extracurricular activities. The activity or program really doesn't matter—none are irreplaceable. What I have just described can as easily occur on a yearbook staff as on a football team. What matters is finding a mentor who knows and lives the prime directive—seizing discipling moments—and whose own passion for some activity matches the passions of willing disciples. Then one day may we all enjoy the eternal prize that will dwarf state championships and standing ovations.†

Wellness, Fitness, and Young Children

Are young children well? Are they fit? Those questions almost seem unnecessary. As we watch young children move—run, climb, jump, and more—we are sure that they are as fit as is possible or necessary.

Think again. This very assumption endangers the wellness and fitness of the children in our classrooms. We need to look at the movement patterns of *all* children and not assume that because some or even most young children move in energetic and healthy ways, all young children are well and healthy.

Medical reports in recent years have documented the increasing incidence of obesity and high blood pressure in children as young as age five. Those medical concerns are clearly related to the level of fitness in young children.

Children and Fitness

How did we get to this state of affairs? Don't young children come with a passion to move and to explore? Why is fitness a concern in early childhood? Shouldn't all young children naturally move to maintain their energy and fitness?

Think about the children in your classroom over the past year. Did all of them exhibit a joy in movement? Or were some of them happy to move the minimum, then sit or stand on the sidelines and simply watch? Why do some young children avoid physical activity? What's the problem?

Exploration and Energy

In past generations, children were encouraged to go outside to run and play. Parents and caregivers rarely worried about children as long as there were established boundaries and rules. Children often played outside until they were called for meals.

Not so today. Very few parents allow young children to play outside on their own. The risks are too great. As a result, children rarely have the opportunity to test their physical skills to the limits. They play outside only under the watchful eye of an adult.

What's the Problem?

In my travels to classrooms in various communities, teachers tell me that children's stamina and desire to move have decreased dramatically over the past two decades. In addition to needing

adult supervision to play outdoors, children spend increasing hours per week in sedentary activities, watching television and playing computer games. Neither television programs nor computer games are evil. But too much sitting decreases the time available for running, jumping, climbing, and playing. And too little time in vigorous activity decreases the cardiovascular fitness and well-being of children.

Finding Solutions

When I began teaching more than 40 years ago, streets and alleys and yards were safe for relatively unsupervised play. And children at play in those settings used lots of energy, translating into fitness and well-being. While we had gym classes available, especially for children beyond the primary years, very few schools worried about gym time for young children. Their physical development was assumed.

That assumption was a fallacy even then. But now it is a serious problem. Children are not moving enough outside of school. They need to have opportunities for that movement during the school day.

I believe that 15% to 20% of a young child's school day should be spent in activities that enhance and support the child's physical development and fitness. No amount of time spent on academic endeavors will be effective if the child's body is lethargic. An active body and an active mind are inseparable!

How do we make this happen? What do we do, especially if we feel unprepared to work with movement and fitness activities?

Building Classrooms for Activity

While there are foundational principles of movement that are important to understand, the most important quality of the fitness teacher is the desire to instill the joy of movement in young children. Assessing what their current stamina level is can be a good beginning. Encouraging and cajoling sustained activity comes next. If children cannot and do not move for twenty minutes, they have not engaged in a heart-healthy level of activity.

We need to examine our schedules to make sure that twenty minutes of activity are even possible. Too often outdoor play time is limited to fifteen minutes. No time for stamina development there!

Children also need to be encouraged to push their physical limits. Just as in adults, huff-and-puff is a good thing and indicates that energy is being expended and developed. Children need to learn to value strenuous activity! And for that to happen, they need to see that their teachers also value that strenuous activity by the active example they set.

Active classrooms are no accident. They are developed by teachers who value physical as well as mental activity. Children's bodies *and* their brains develop through use—vigorous and sustained use. Active muscles produce mental as well as physical stamina. Help children learn to use the bodies God has given them. The stamina they develop becomes the fuel for all other learning!✎

In But Not Of—But In For Sure

Recently, we in Illinois independent higher education got quite a wake-up call. It seems that the state legislature has a budget gap of over one billion dollars to close for the next fiscal year. Given the reluctance of lawmakers to increase taxes in an election year, their attention has focused on expense reductions. One proposal, worth about \$200 million, is to eliminate state-funded scholarships to students who choose to attend a private college or university. The share of the reduction to be borne by Concordia students would come to about \$1.8 million, or about 8% of our annual revenues as a university.

My present purpose is neither to complain nor to inflame: already, other proposals are afloat, and, in any event, by the time these words appear in print, the legislature will have adjourned for the session. Rather, it's to comment on the campus response, when I brought back word of this proposal and sought help from members of our campus community in educating our representatives and senators about the potentially devastating consequences of the proposal before them. Thanks to the marvels of technology, within a couple of days we were able to determine which of our students benefit from state scholarship aid and to provide them with the names and addresses of their legislators, as well as key points to communicate.

I have no way of knowing exactly how many students responded. But out of 450 such students, a couple of dozen said that they would write a letter. No doubt, the number was depressed by the rapid approach of the end of the semester. Still, it amazed me that so few were willing to invest even a few minutes in political activity for the sake of an issue that was so obviously in their own interest. I wondered what the response would have been had the issue been more altruistic in nature.

That has me concerned. As a group, Lutheran Christians are famously reluctant to get engaged in what our theology terms "the kingdom of God's left hand." As a consequence, an important voice is often missing from public discourse, a voice that rejects both attempts to divorce matters of faith from those of our civil order and efforts to marry them. Rather, we would hold them in tension and insist that, while we do not seek (in Blake's words) to "build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land," we do believe that our common life will be the better for all, if we live as those who stand under the judgment and grace of God.

Christians have no special corner on wisdom in the civil realm, but such as we have is of no use, if we sit on our hands—and our keyboards.†

A Final Word

by George C. Heider, President, Concordia University, River Forest, IL

Index to Volume 137

AAdministrative Talk, *Glen Kuck*

Being Alone in a School Filled with People 142

Breaking the Rules of Good Management 223

Time Stays, We Go 300

What Students Want from Their Principal 58

Adult Education in the Congregation: An Andragogical Approach, *Elaine Sipe* 87*Agness, Phyllis and Beverly Parke*. Hand in Hand: A Ministry Through
Education 214*Athens and Jerusalem, George Heider* 296**B***Barz, Jonathan*. From Where I Sit

Do the Dishes or Pave the Driveway? 164

Toward a Theology of Frills in Lutheran Education 4

Review: *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep
Faith with Their Religious Traditions* by Robert Benne 73*Beck, Gretchen*. Taking Ethical Action as an Artist 31*Bimler, Rich*. Multiplying Ministries

Balancing Life with Hope 231

Blessed Are ... We! 67

The Day the Laughter Died 152

"How Ya Doin'?" 309

Blanke, Mark. The Participation of Adults in Religious Education Experiences 95

Book Reviews.

Fortress Introduction to The Lutheran Confessions by Gunther Gassman and

Scott Hendrix, Kenneth Heinitz 238

*Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with
Their Religious Traditions* by Robert Benne, Jonathan Barz 73**C**Change!?: Reflections on Lutheran Schools at the Dawn of the Millennium, *Carl**Moser* 131**D**

DCE Expressions

Bible Study Online: Virtual or Reality?, *John Wengel* 144How Important is Certification? A DCE's Journey, *Lori R. Potratz* 225Sensitizing Parents to the Role of Assets in Faith Development, *Brent Howard* 60Walking the Tight Rope ... Discovering the Art of Balance as a Child of God,
Patra Pfotenhauer 302

<i>Delaney, Douglas M. Equitable Funding for All School Children</i>	179
--	-----

E

Educating the Whole Child, *Jean Harrison*

From a Misconception to the Meaningful: An Open Letter to Lutheran Educators	63
Genuinely Making the Grade: School Performance Ensemble Assessment ..	227
Have You Joined the Movement?	147
What Can They Do? What Do They Know? Competency in the Arts	305
<i>Equitable Funding for All School Children, Douglas M. Delaney</i>	179

F

<i>Ferry, Patrick. Telling the Good News about Jesus in the Year of the Child</i>	47
---	----

A Final Word, *George Heider*

“Choice” as a Seed of Heresy	240
Encouraging Random Acts of Kindness	80
In But Not Of—But In For Sure	315
What in God’s Name?: Lessons from 11 September, 2001	159

From Where I Sit

Celibacy or Action, <i>William Rietschel</i>	244
Do the Dishes or Pave the Driveway?, <i>Jonathan Barz</i>	164
Process vs. Context, <i>William Rietschel</i>	84
Toward a Theology of Frills in Lutheran Education, <i>Jonathan Barz</i>	4

G

The Gift of Global Song to the Congregation, <i>Helen Grosshans</i>	20
<i>Gotsch, Richard. Reflections on Science and Faith in the Parish</i>	124
Governmental Financial Support for Parochial Education within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Historical Perspective, <i>Robert M. Toepper</i>	166
<i>Grosshans, Helen. The Gift of Global Song to the Congregation</i>	20

H

<i>Hand in Hand: A Ministry Through Education, Phyllis Agness and Beverly Parke</i> ..	214
--	-----

Harrison, Jean. Educating the Whole Child

From a Misconception to the Meaningful: An Open Letter to Lutheran Educators	63
Genuinely Making the Grade: School Performance Ensemble Assessment ..	227
Have You Joined the Movement?	147
What Can They Do? What Do They Know? Competency in the Arts	305

Heider, George. A Final Word

“Choice” as a Seed of Heresy	240
Encouraging Random Acts of Kindness	80
In But Not Of—But In For Sure	315

What in God's Name?: Lessons from 11 September, 2001	159
Athens and Jerusalem	296
<i>Heinitz, Kenneth.</i> Book Review: <i>Fortress Introduction to The Lutheran Confessions</i> by Gunther Gassman and Scott Hendrix	238
<i>Hetzner, Tim.</i> Reaching the Un-Churched Through Bible Study	116
<i>Howard, Brent.</i> Sensitizing Parents to the Role of Assets in Faith Development (DCE Expressions)	60

I

J

<i>Jander, Louis.</i> Revisiting <i>Congregations at Crossroads</i>	104
---	-----

K

<i>Kuck, Glen.</i> Administrative Talk	
Being Alone in a School Filled with People	142
Breaking the Rules of Good Management	223
Time Stays, We Go	300
What Students Want from Their Principal	58

L

<i>Laabs, Jonathan.</i> Today's Lutheran Educator	
Gathering Together	150
The Power of Participation	65
The Three C's	229
What It Takes	307
<i>Liefeld, David.</i> The Responsibility to Teach: Is It Rightfully Assumed by the Modern Nation-State?	282
A Lutheran School Responds to Homeschooling, <i>Sherry Prange</i>	205

M

<i>Mau, Dwayne.</i> Public/Private: A Concept for Action	275
<i>Miller, Duane.</i> Milwaukee's Parental Choice for Schools Program: A Lutheran Educator's Experience and Perspective	187
Milwaukee's Parental Choice for Schools Program: A Lutheran Educator's Experience and Perspective, <i>Duane Miller</i>	187
<i>Moeller, Eric.</i> Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine: Maintaining a Lutheran Balance	246
<i>Morgenthaler, Shirley.</i> Teaching the Young	
Children and Creativity	71
Discovering the World with a Young Child	235
Learning Language and Literacy with Children	156
Wellness, Fitness, and Young Children	313
<i>Moser, Carl.</i> Change!?!?: Reflections on Lutheran Schools at the Dawn of the	

Millennium	131
Multiplying Ministries, <i>Rich Bimler</i>	
Balancing Life with Hope	231
Blessed Are . . . We!	67
The Day the Laughter Died	152
“How Ya Doin’?”	309

N O P

<i>Parke, Beverly and Phyllis Agness. Hand in Hand: A Ministry Through</i>	
Education	214
<i>Parrott, Craig. Secondary Sequence</i>	
I Don’t Want Any More Self-Esteem!	69
This Is Better than Conflict Resolution!	154
Why Are You Asking Me That?	233
Which Prize Do We Value More?	311
The Participation of Adults in Religious Education Experiences, <i>Mark Blanke</i>	95
<i>Pfotenhauer, Patra. Walking the Tight Rope . . . Discovering the Art of Balance as a</i>	
Child of God (DCE Expressions)	302
<i>Potratz, Lori R. How Important is Certification? A DCE’s Journey (DCE</i>	
Expressions)	225
<i>Prange, Sherry. A Lutheran School Responds to Homeschooling</i>	205
Public/Private: A Concept for Action, <i>Dwayne Mau</i>	375

Q R

Reaching the Un-Churched Through Bible Study, <i>Tim Hetzner</i>	116
Reflections on Science and Faith in the Parish, <i>Richard Gotsch</i>	124
The Responsibility to Teach: Is It Rightfully Assumed by the Modern Nation-State?,	
David Liefeld	282
Revisiting <i>Congregations at Crossroads</i> , <i>Louis Jander</i>	104
<i>Rietschel, William. From Where I Sit</i>	
Process vs. Context	84
Celibacy or Action?	244

S

Secondary Sequence, <i>Craig Parrott</i>	
I Don’t Want Any More Self-Esteem!	69
This Is Better than Conflict Resolution!	154
Why Are You Asking Me That?	233
Which Prize Do We Value More?	311
Secularization and the Two Kingdoms Doctrine: Maintaining a Lutheran Balance, <i>Eric</i>	

<i>Moeller</i>	246
<i>Sipe, Elaine</i> . Adult Education in the Congregation: An Andragogical Approach ..	87
A Survey of Voucher Objections, <i>Richard A. Zeile</i>	193

T

Taking Ethical Action as an Artist, <i>Gretchen Beck</i>	31
Teaching the Young, <i>Shirley Morgenthaler</i>	
Children and Creativity	71
Discovering the World with a Young Child	235
Learning Language and Literacy with Children	156
Wellness, Fitness, and Young Children	313
Telling the Good News about Jesus in the Year of the Child, <i>Patrick Ferry</i>	47
Today's Lutheran Educator, <i>Jonathan Laabs</i>	
Gathering Together	150
The Power of Participation	65
The Three C's	229
What It Takes	307
<i>Toepper, Robert M.</i> Governmental Financial Support for Parochial Education within The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Historical Perspective	166
Truth, Paradox, and the Possibility of "Lutheran Epistemology," <i>O. John Zillman</i> ..	261

U

V

W

<i>Wangerin, Walter Jr.</i> The Writing of <i>Branta</i> and Other Affections	6
<i>Wengel, John</i> . Bible Study Online: Virtual or Reality? (DCE Expressions)	144
The Writing of <i>Branta</i> and Other Affections, <i>Walter Wangerin, Jr.</i>	6

X

Y

Z

<i>Zeile, Richard A.</i> A Survey of Voucher Objections	193
<i>Zillman, O. John</i> . Truth, Paradox, and the Possibility of "Lutheran Epistemology" ..	261